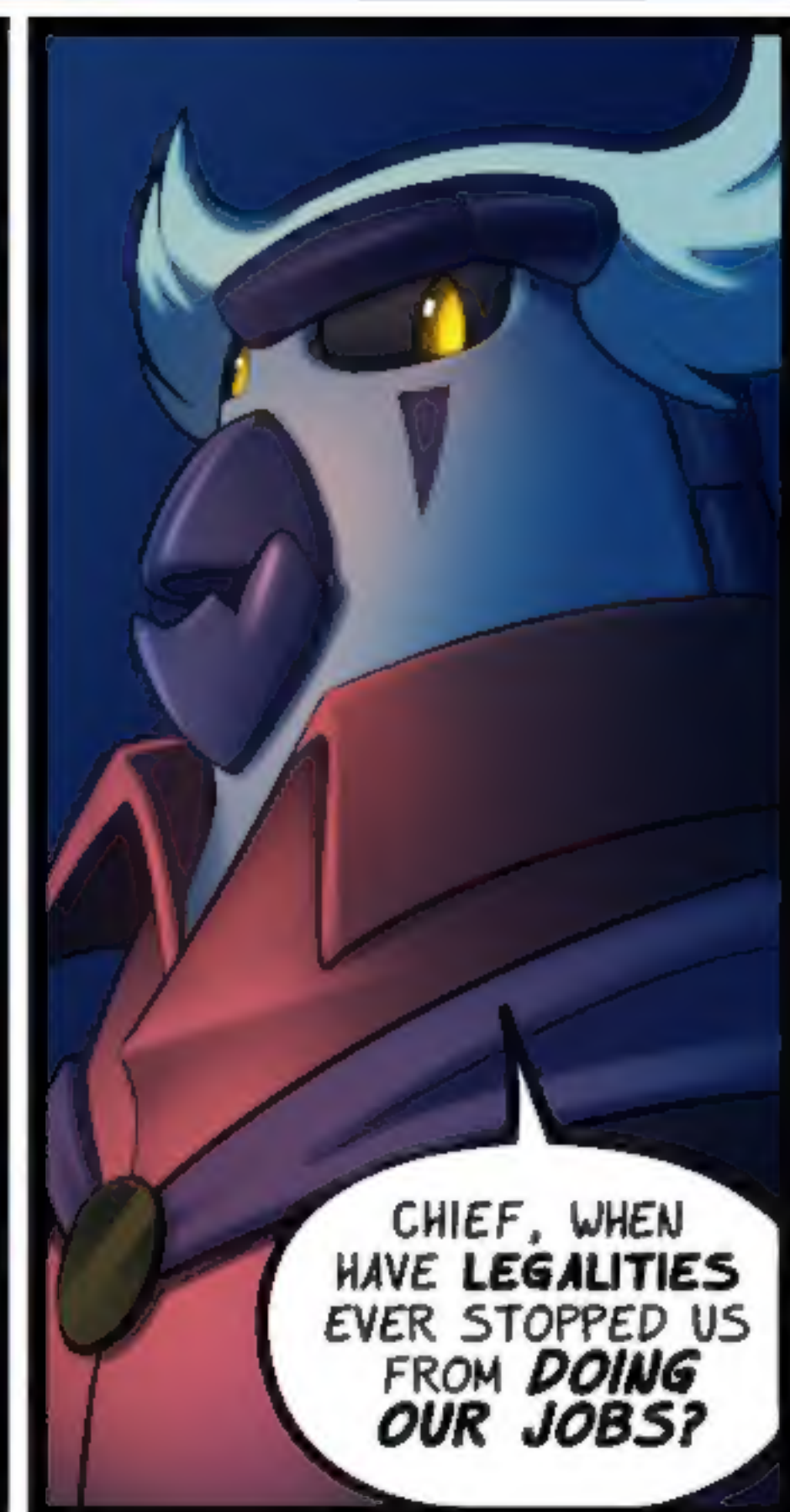
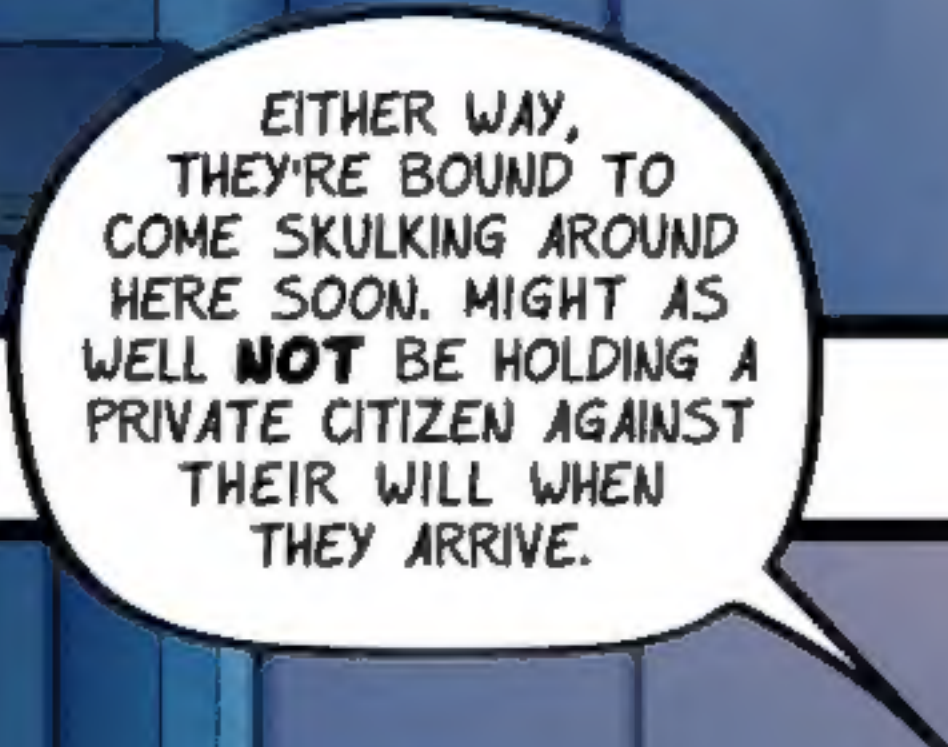


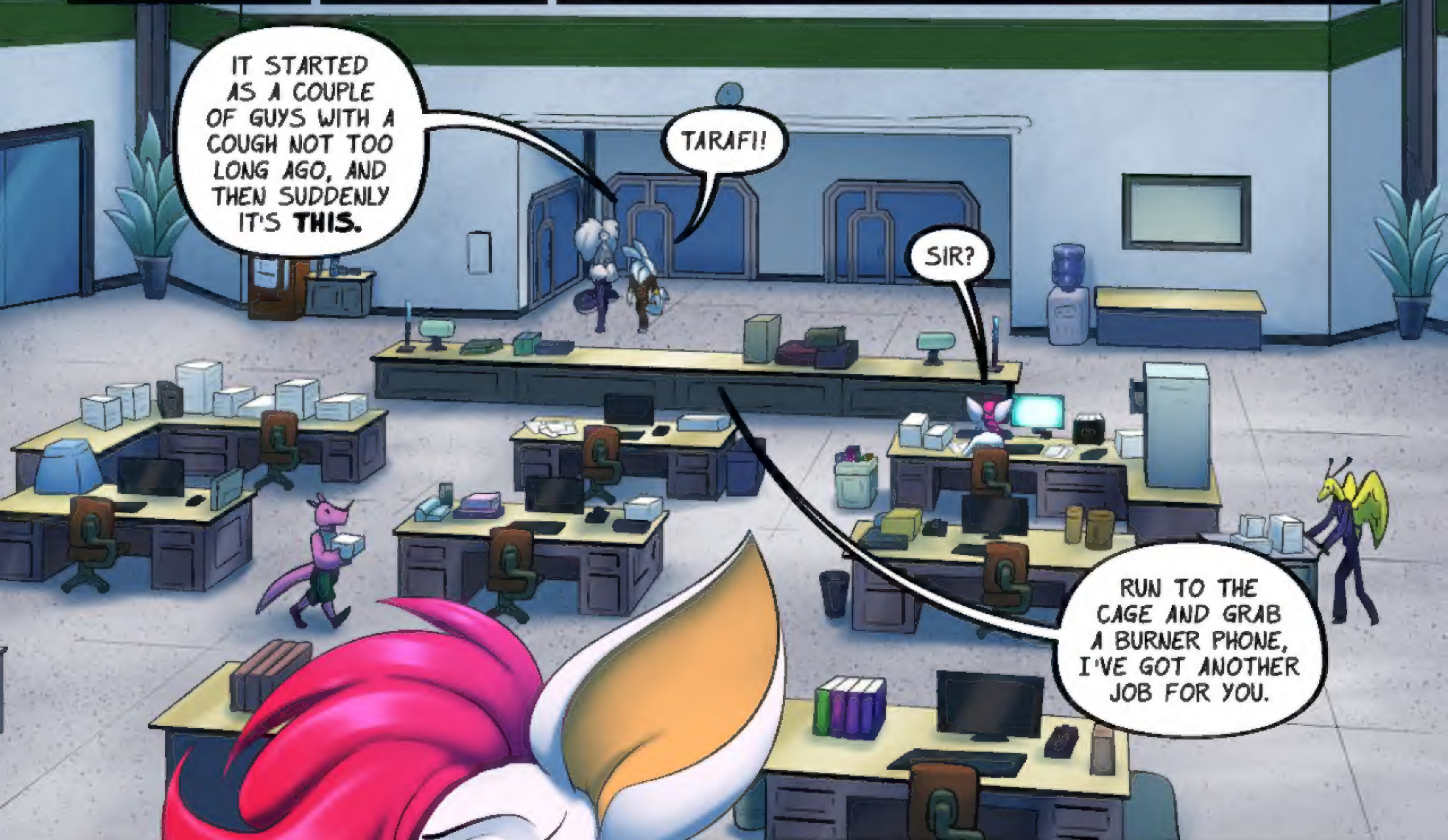




CAUTION













YET ANOTHER
MAN DOWN, AND
IT'S NOT EVEN
NOON YET.

CRAP.

YEAH. I'M
GONNA TAKE
THIS GUY TO
THE INFIRMARY
BEFORE HE
PASSES OUT
ON US.

COUGH
COUGH



TARAFI, YOU HAVE
YOUR ASSIGNMENT.
FALLAN, STAY OUT
OF TROUBLE.

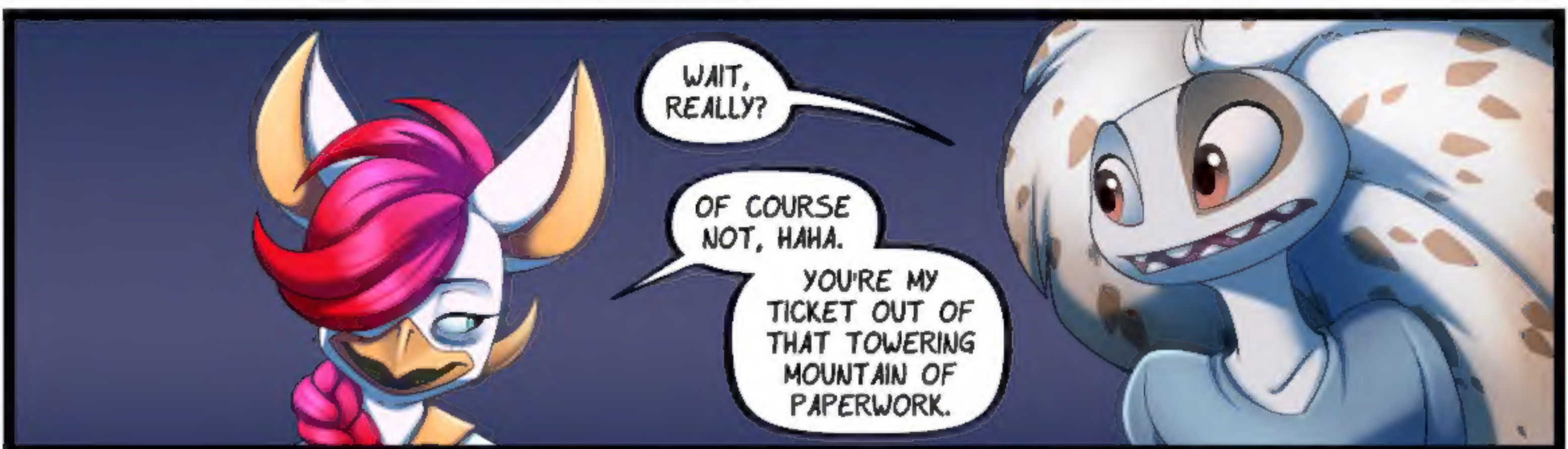
YES
SIR.

SURE
THING.



SOOOO...
HYPOTHETICALLY,
WHAT WOULD IT
TAKE TO CONVINCE
YOU THAT TAILING
ME EVERYWHERE
IS A WASTE
OF TIME?

BUY ME AN
ENERGY DRINK
AND I'LL THINK
ABOUT IT.



WAIT,
REALLY?

OF COURSE
NOT, HAHA.

YOU'RE MY
TICKET OUT OF
THAT TOWERING
MOUNTAIN OF
PAPERWORK.



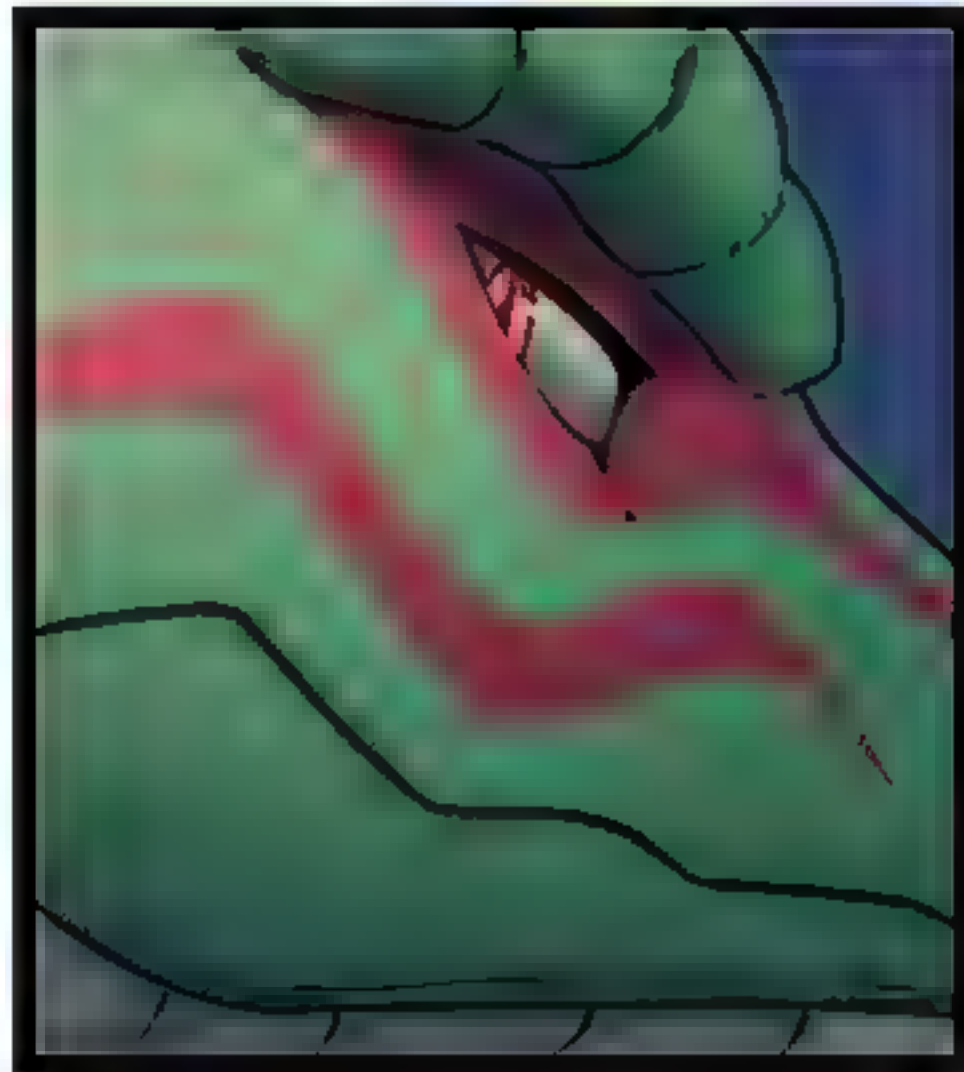
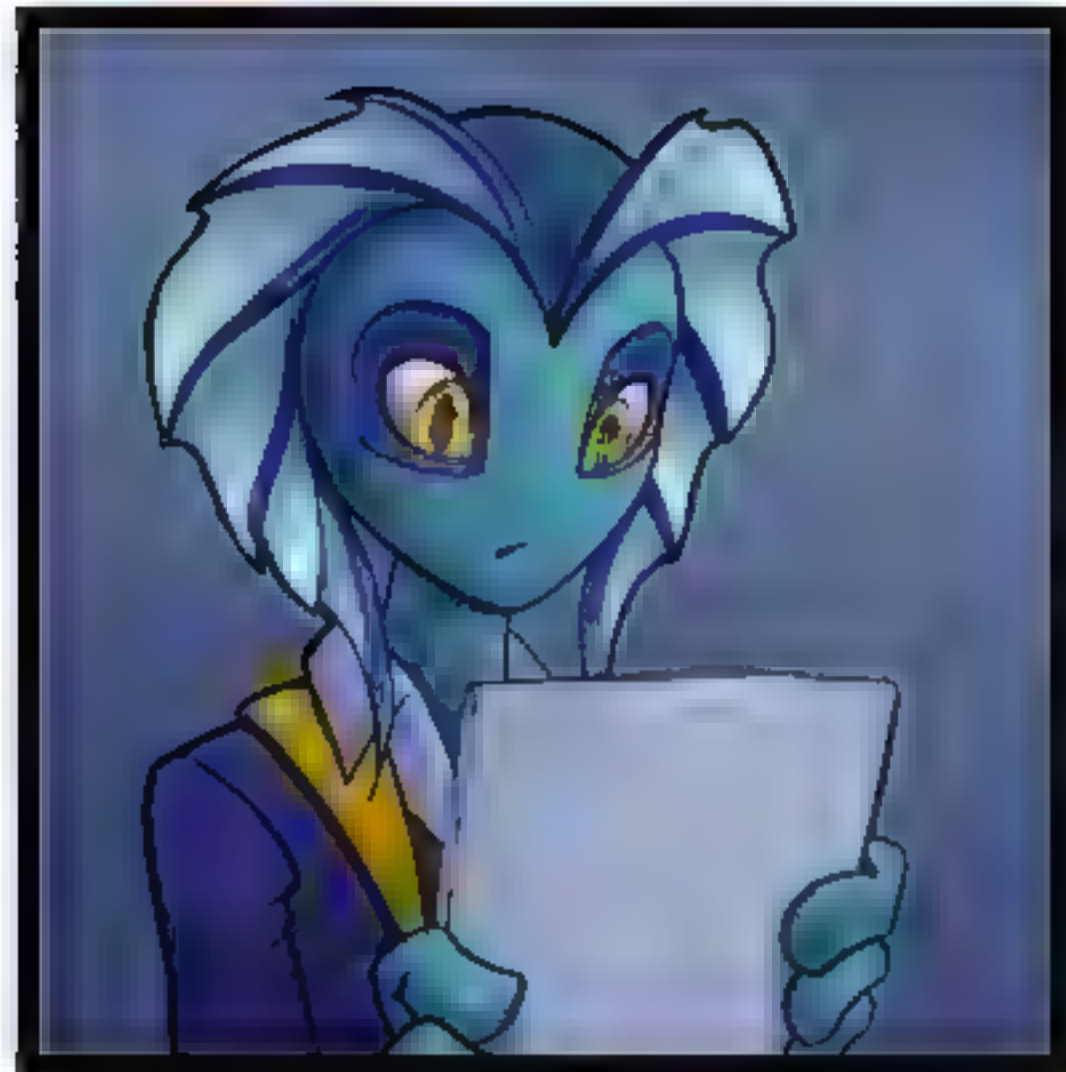
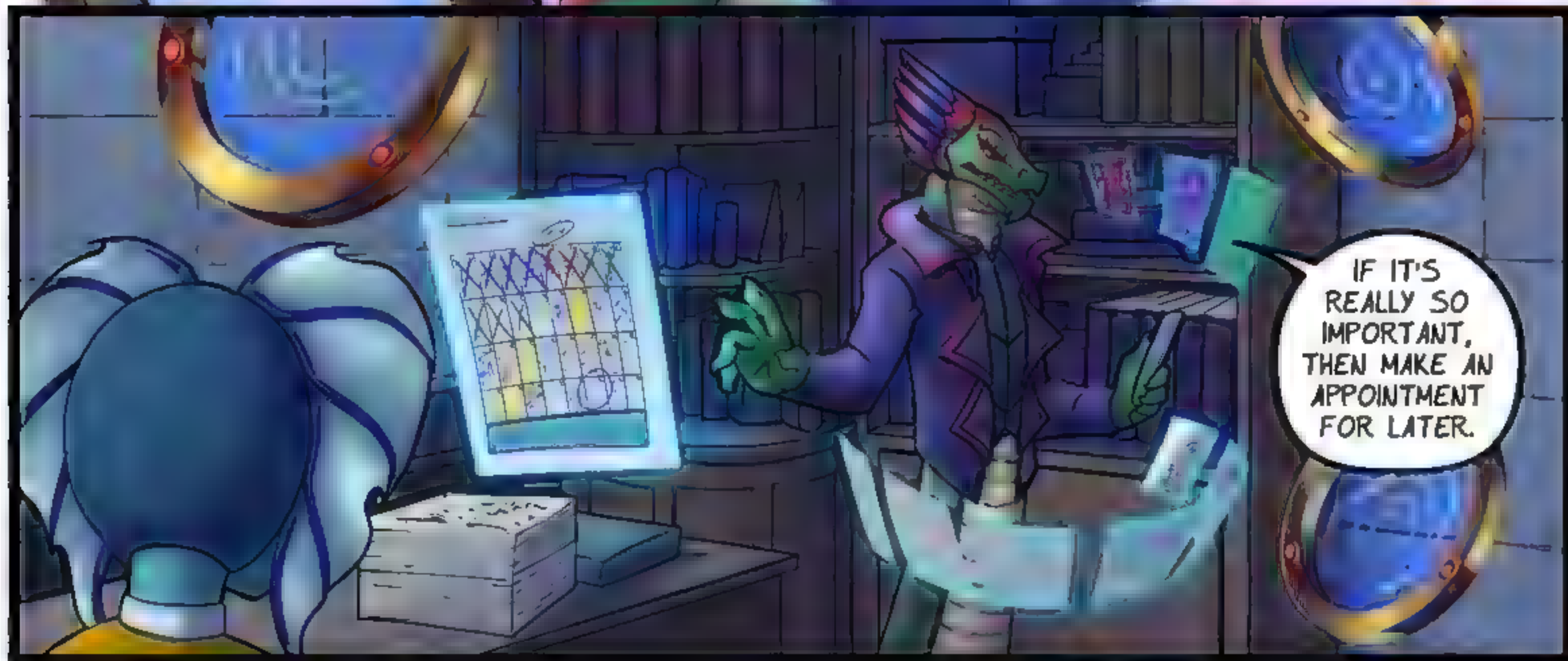
WAIT, ARE THESE...

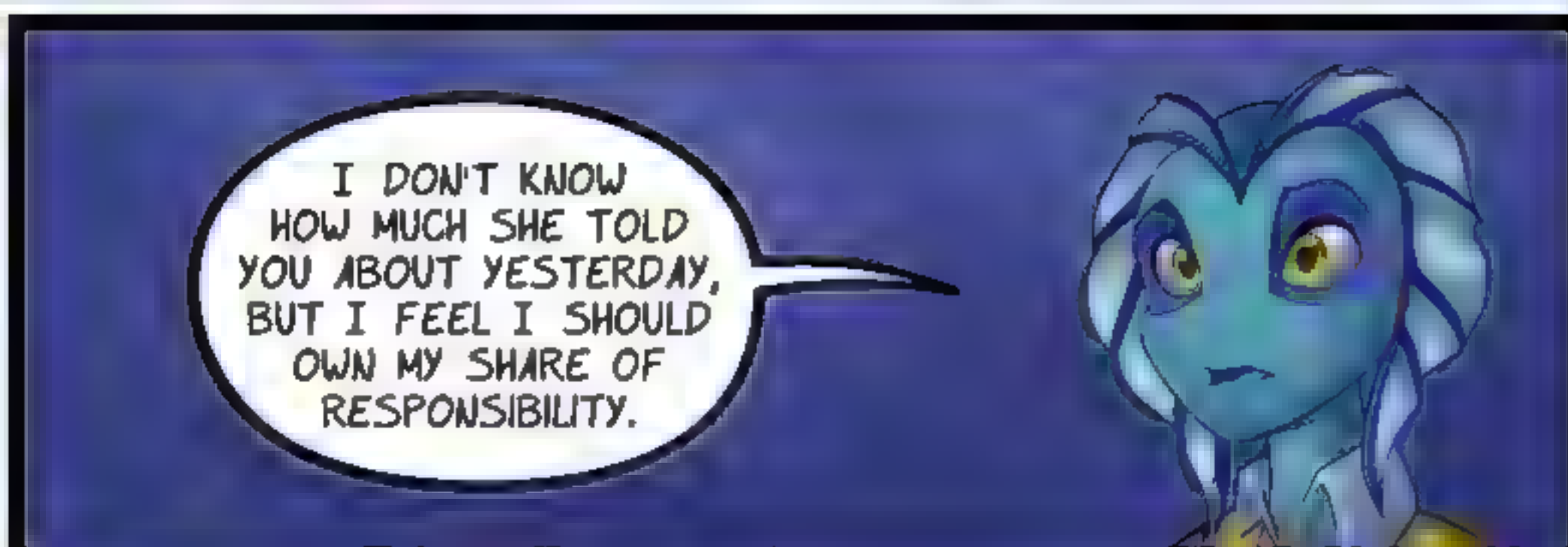
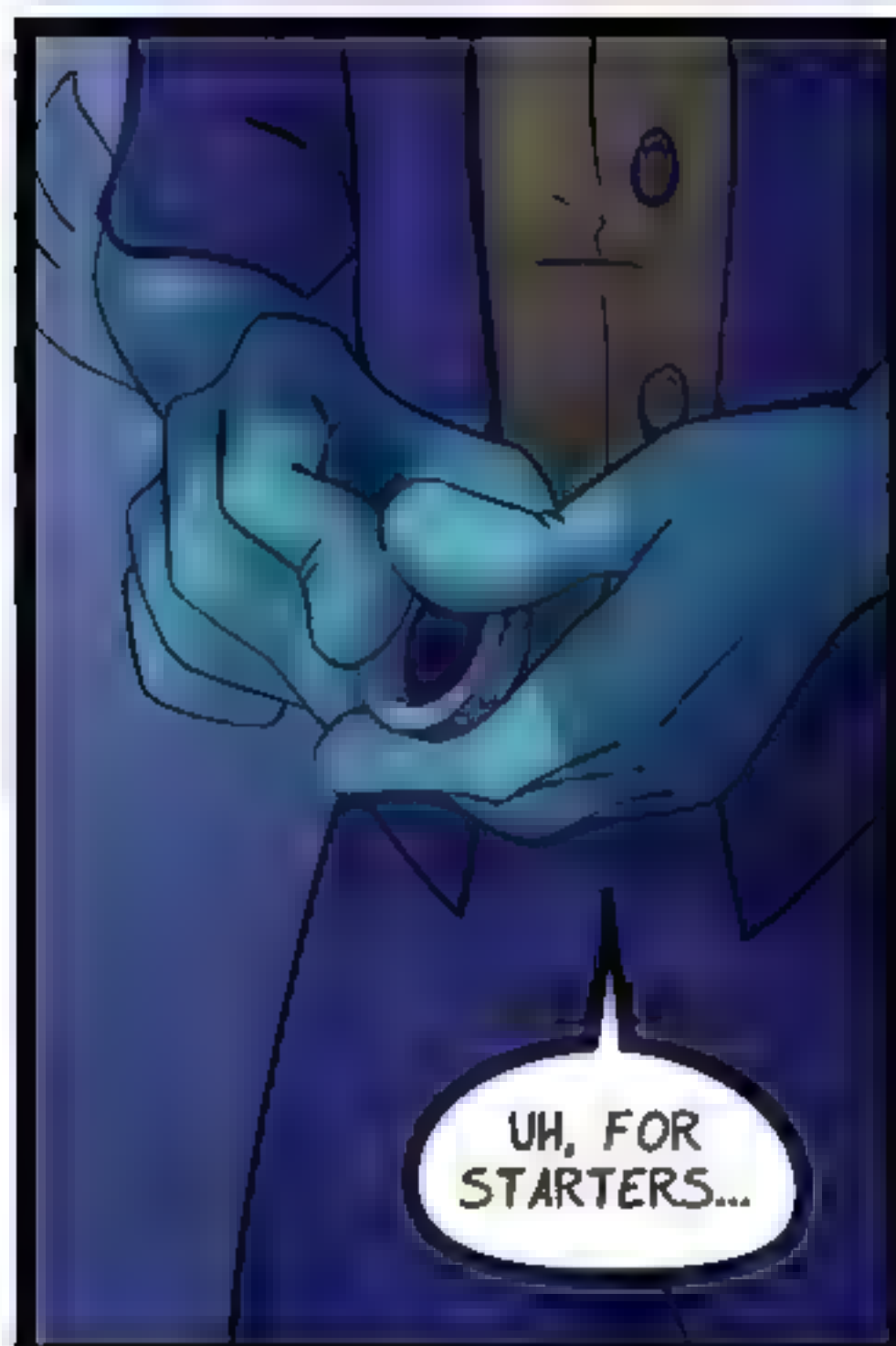
...THESE ARE ALL MY PEOPLE.

IS THIS "FLU" ONLY HITTING PEOPLE ON MY STAFF?









OH.
UM--

YES, I
UNDERSTAND
THAT, SIR.

I ONLY SAID
THAT FOR THE
SAKE OF FULL
DISCLOSURE.

ANYWAY--

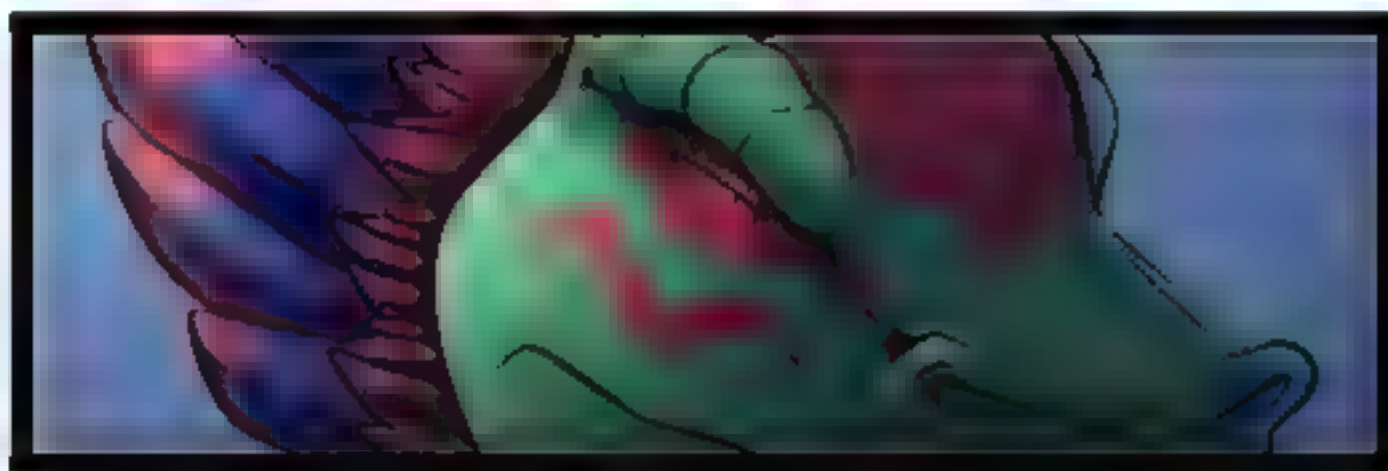
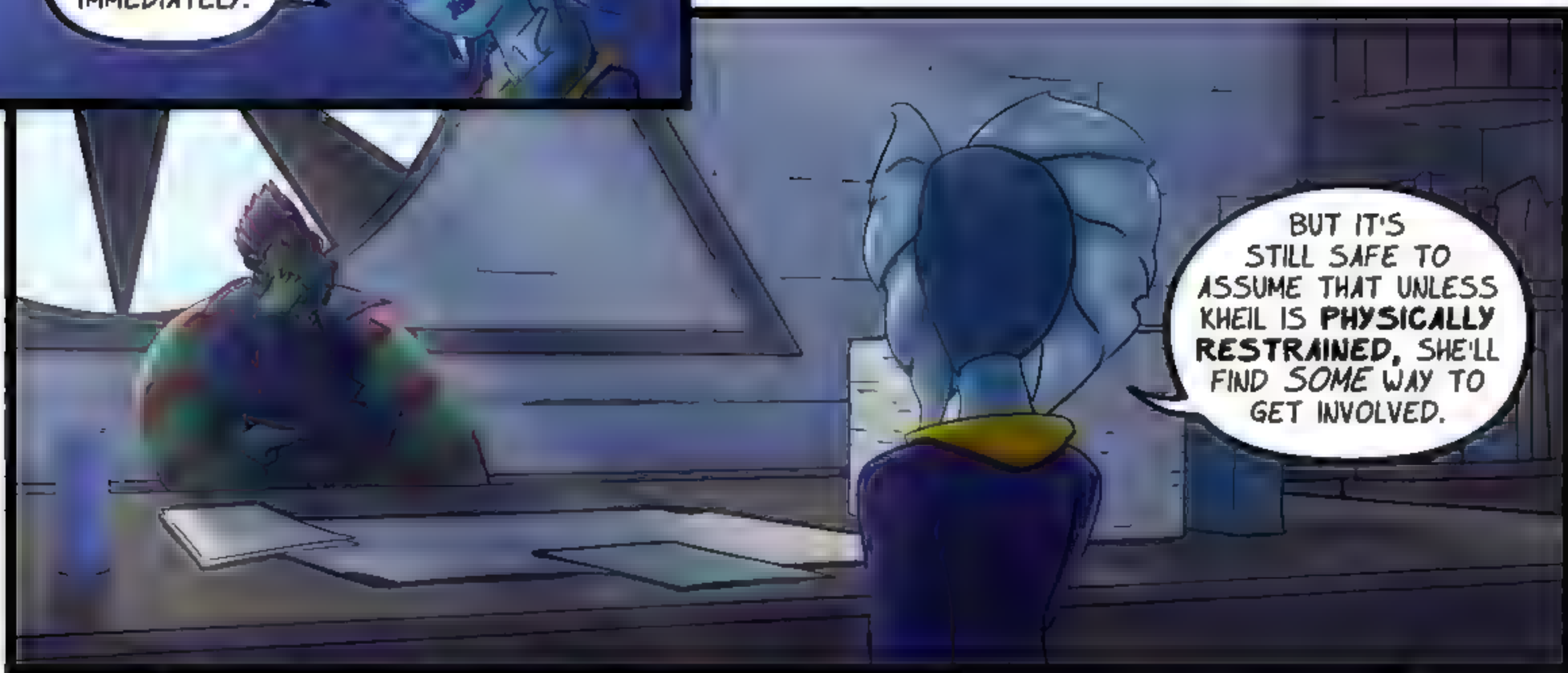
WHEN I TALKED
TO HER ABOUT HER
BEHAVIOR LATER, SHE
AGREED TO REEL IT IN,
SOFTEN HER APPROACH.
QUITE SIGNIFICANTLY,
IN FACT.

WHAT
IS YOUR
POINT?

I KNOW HOW
TO GET HER TO
LISTEN, SIR.

NOW, INSTEAD
OF BULLYING KIDS,
SHE WANTS TO APPLY
FOR A SURVEILLANCE
TEAM INTERNSHIP AND
GET PHOTO EVIDENCE
OF LAST NIGHT'S
ALLEGED INTRUDER.

IF YOU'RE
GOING TO ASK ME
TO ALLOW THIS, THE
ANSWER IS NO.





MS. ISBISEI, THAT IS ADMIRABLE-- BUT YOU HAVE ALREADY TAKEN ON MORE DUTIES THAN MOST PEOPLE CAN HANDLE.

BETWEEN YOUR GRADES, YOUR STUDENT AIDE RESPONSIBILITIES, YOUR TASKS FOR THE INSPECTOR...

AREN'T YOU SPREADING YOURSELF TOO THIN?

I'M CONFIDENT THAT I CAN DO IT, HEADMASTER.

AND I DON'T WANT TO WATCH HER MAKE BAD CHOICES, KNOWING I COULD DO SOMETHING.

SHE'S MY FRIEND.



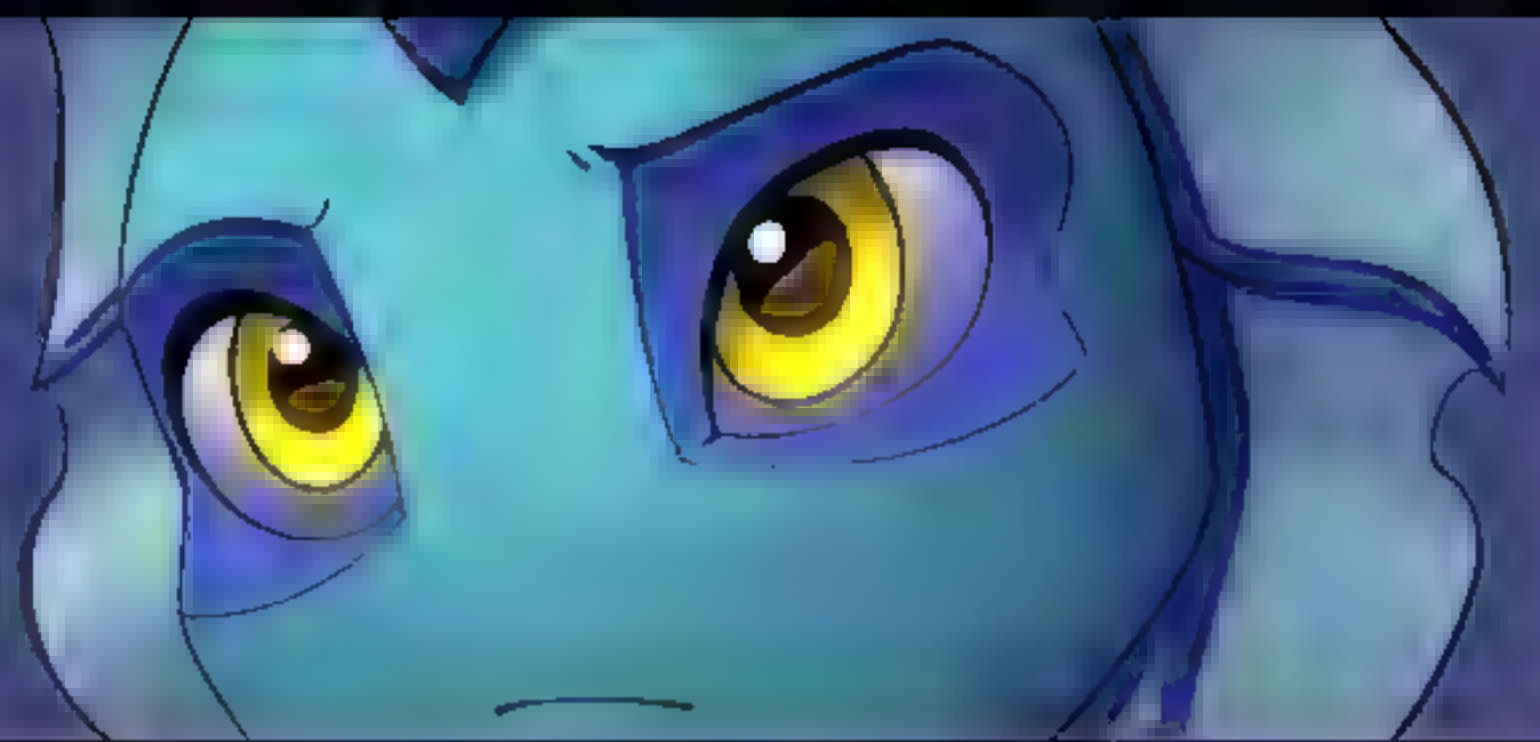
INTERESTING.

THAT'S AN
IRONIC THING
TO SAY...

GIVEN THAT
IT WASN'T TOO
LONG AGO THAT YOU
PUNISHED A GROUP
OF YOUR PEERS FOR
DISOBEYING YOUR
DIRECT ORDERS.

IN YOUR
POSTMORTEM
REPORT, YOU CLAIMED
THAT YOUR ACTIONS
WERE A RESPONSE
TO A FAILURE OF
YOUR TEAM.

THEIR FAILURE
TO GRASP THE
IMPORTANCE OF
DEFERENCE TO
THE CHAIN OF
COMMAND.



AND YET,
HERE YOU
ARE NOW--



--PUSHING A
REQUEST EVEN
AFTER I HAVE
EXPLICITLY
DENIED IT.



ON THE
OTHER HAND...

YOUR TEAMMATES
REJECTED YOUR
LEADERSHIP OUT OF
COMPASSION FOR
THEIR PEERS.



THE SAME
COMPASSION
THAT NOW DRIVES
YOU TO RISK YOUR
OWN SUCCESS FOR
THE SAKE OF
YOUR FRIEND.



NOW, HEAR
ME OUT.

EMPATHY--
PARTICULARLY FOR
YOUR SUBORDINATES-- IS
A CRITICAL LEADERSHIP SKILL,
ONE THAT CAN KEEP A
UNIT FROM SPLINTERING
IN A CRISIS.

ITS VITAL
IMPORTANCE
IS TOO OFTEN
OVERLOOKED.

AND DESPITE
OUR BEST EFFORTS,
IT'S THE ONE SKILL
WE'VE FAILED TO
TEACH YOU.

SIR,
I DON'T
SEE--



I KNOW,
JUST KEEP
LISTENING:



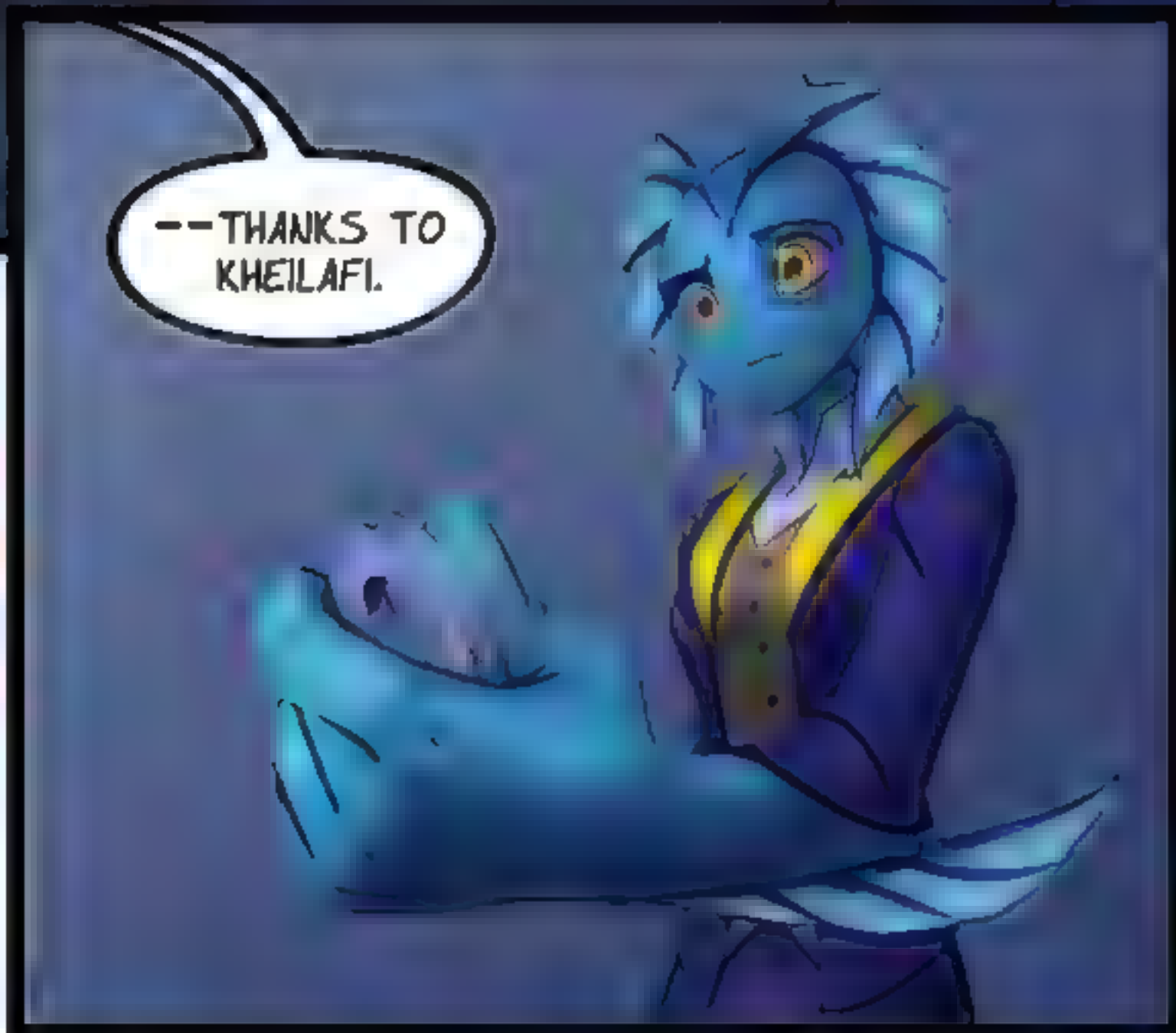
WE'VE PUZZLED
OVER YOU IN OUR LAST
FEW STAFF MEETINGS.
YOU PICK UP ON EVERY
OTHER SUBJECT SO
QUICKLY, AND THEN
EXCEL AT IT.

YET SIMPLE
INTERPERSONAL
CONNECTION, WHICH
COMES SO NATURALLY TO
MOST PEOPLE, HAS
ELUDED YOU.

IT'S SUCH AN
UNUSUAL PROBLEM
THAT WE WEREN'T
SURE HOW BEST TO
APPROACH IT.



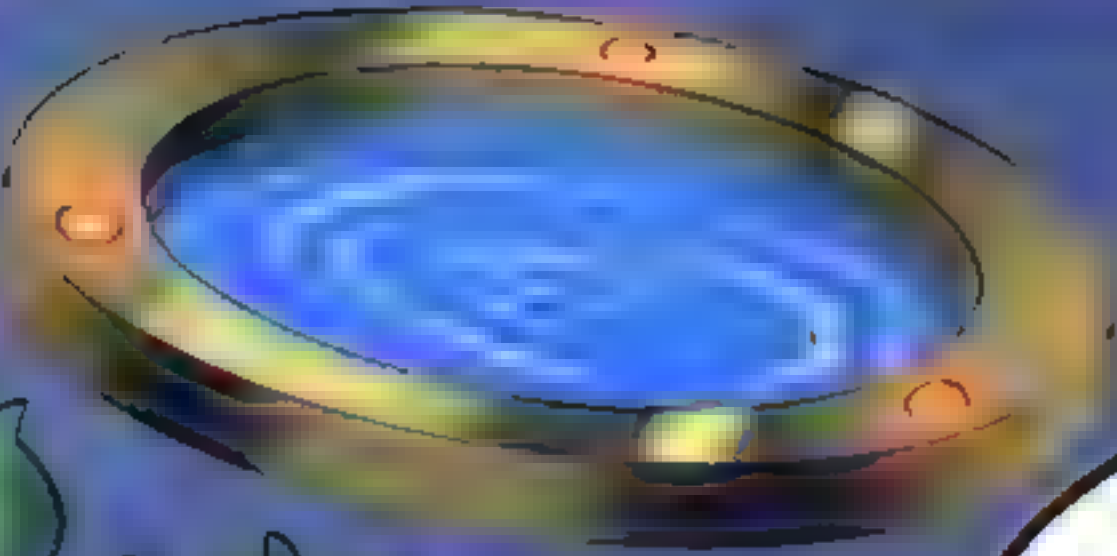
BUT NOW, IT
SEEMS YOU MAY HAVE
STARTED DOWN THE
RIGHT PATH--



--THANKS TO
KHEILAFI.

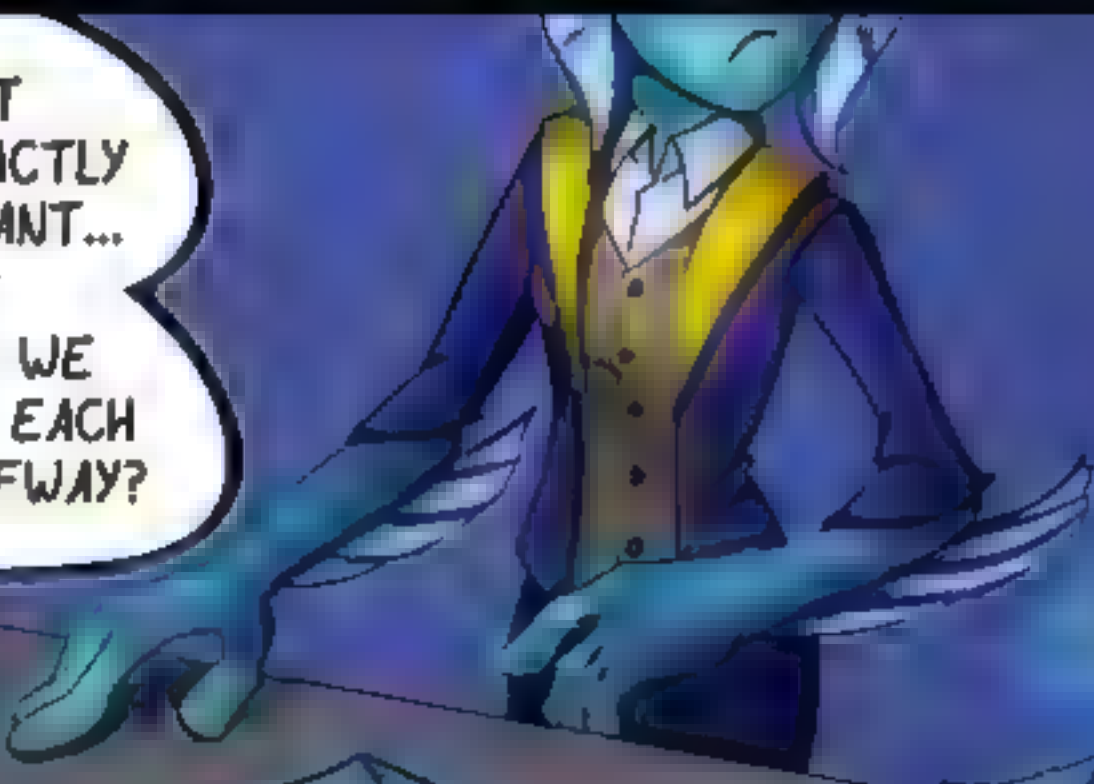


IN LIGHT OF
THIS, I HAVE
A PROPOSAL.



AS YOU KNOW,
I CANNOT IN GOOD
CONSCIENCE ALLOW YOU,
OR KHEIL, OR ANY OTHER
STUDENT TO BE INVOLVED
WITH THE SURVEILLANCE
TEAM, DUE TO ISSUES
OF SAFETY.

HOWEVER, IT
IS GOOD TO SEE
YOU TWO HELPING EACH
OTHER TO REACH YOUR FULL
POTENTIAL. I'D LIKE TO
ENCOURAGE THIS.



I CANNOT
GIVE YOU EXACTLY
WHAT YOU WANT...
...BUT
PERHAPS WE
CAN MEET EACH
OTHER HALFWAY?

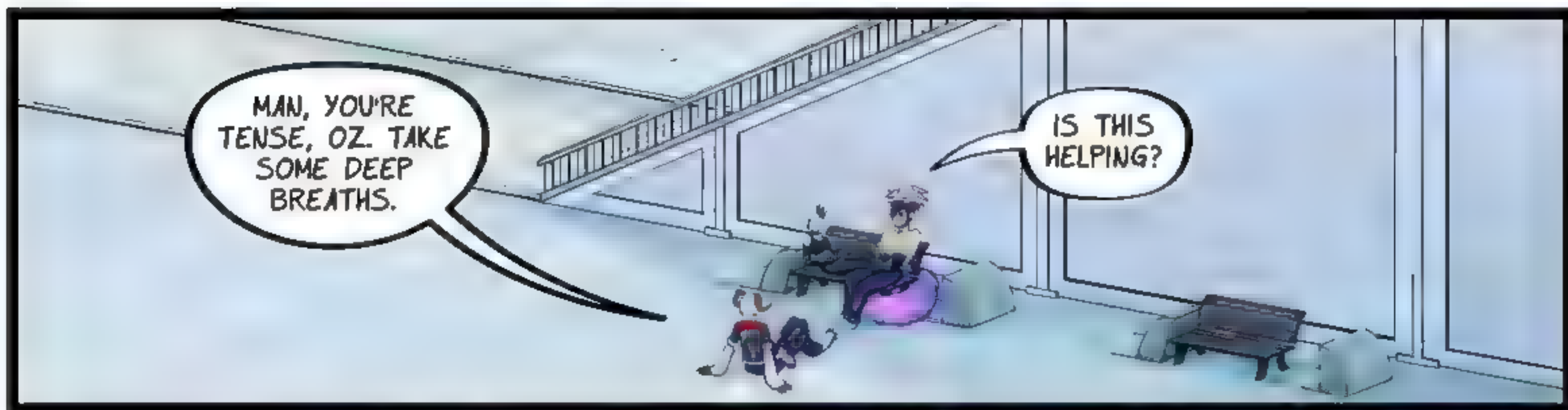


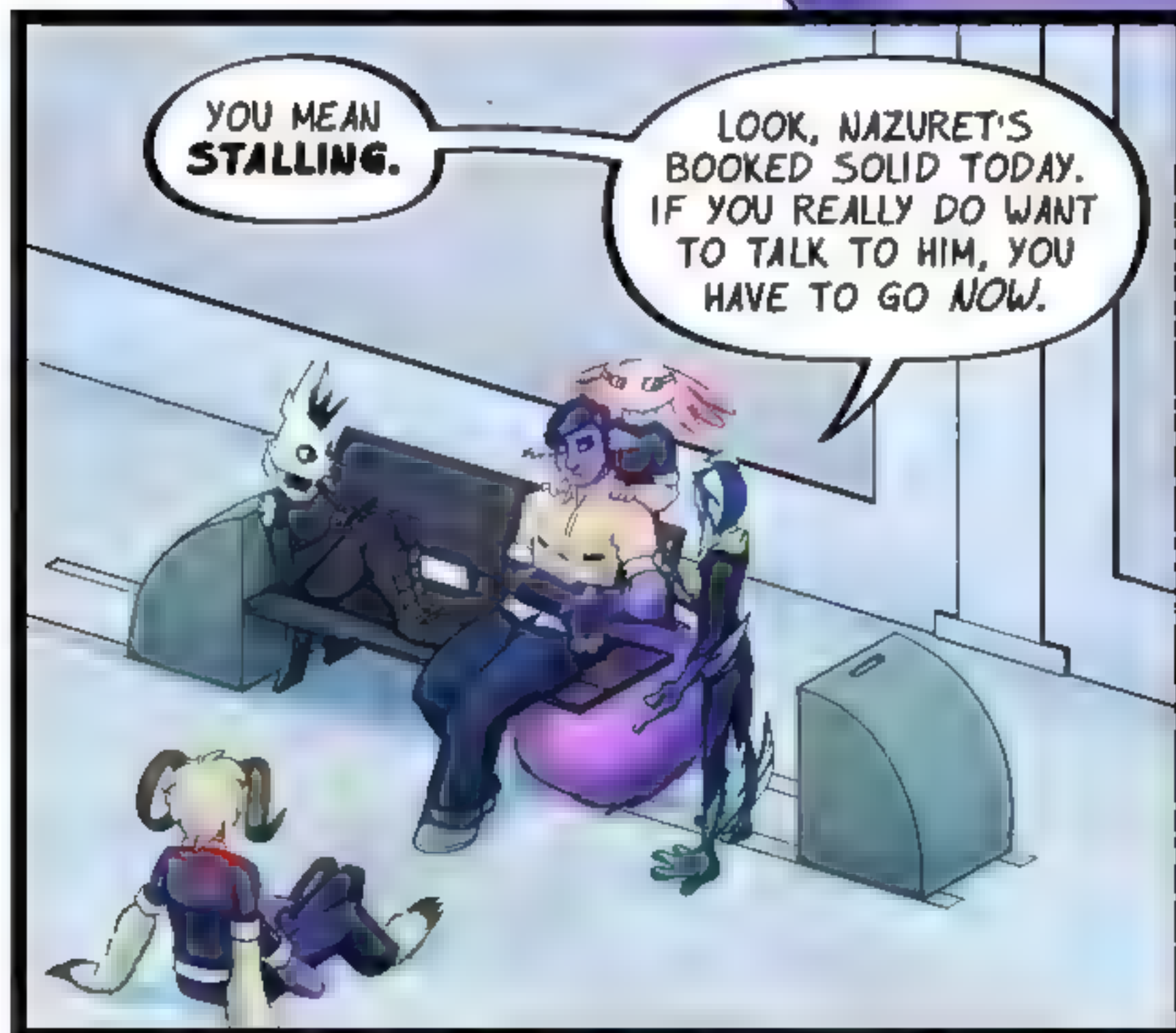
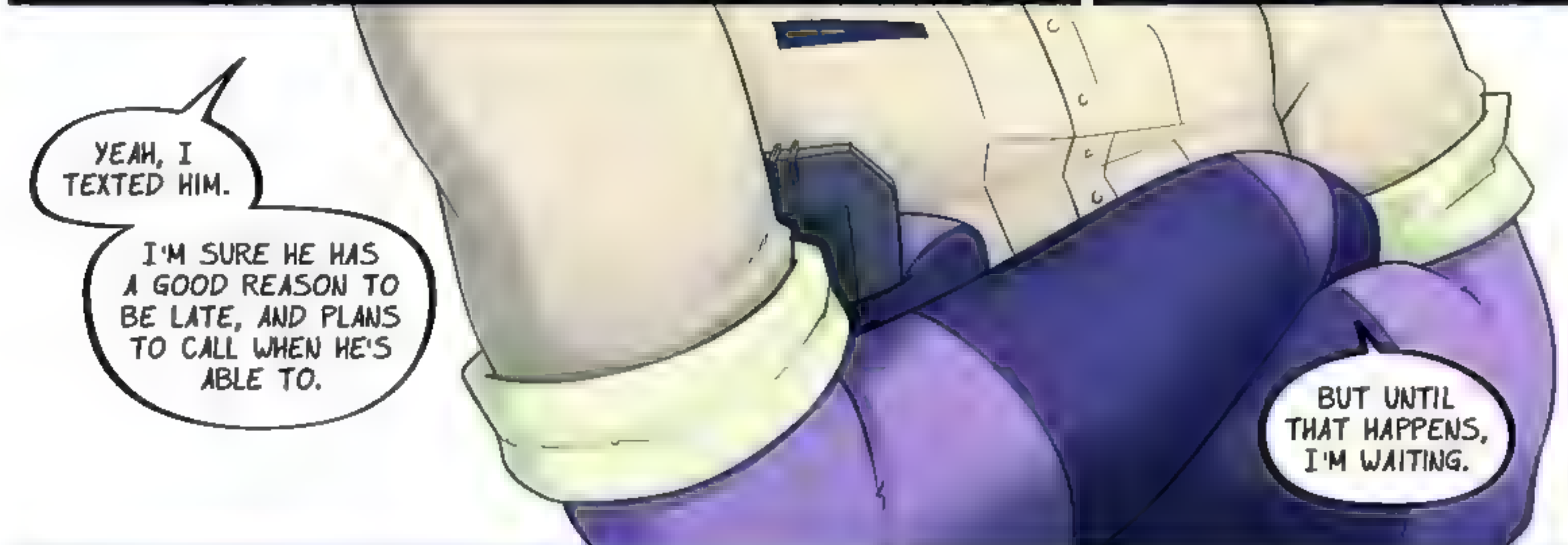
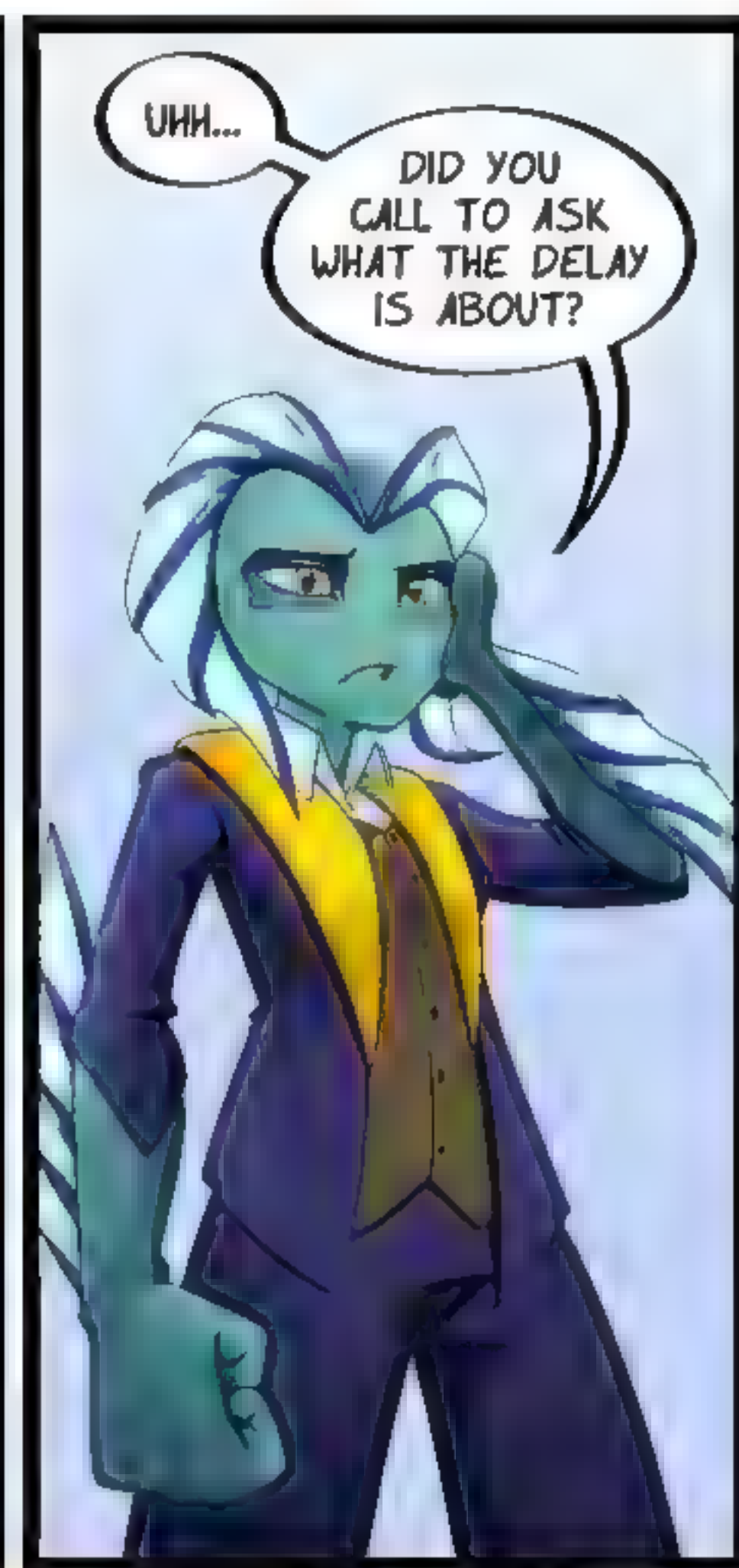
Y-YES
SIR!

GOOD.



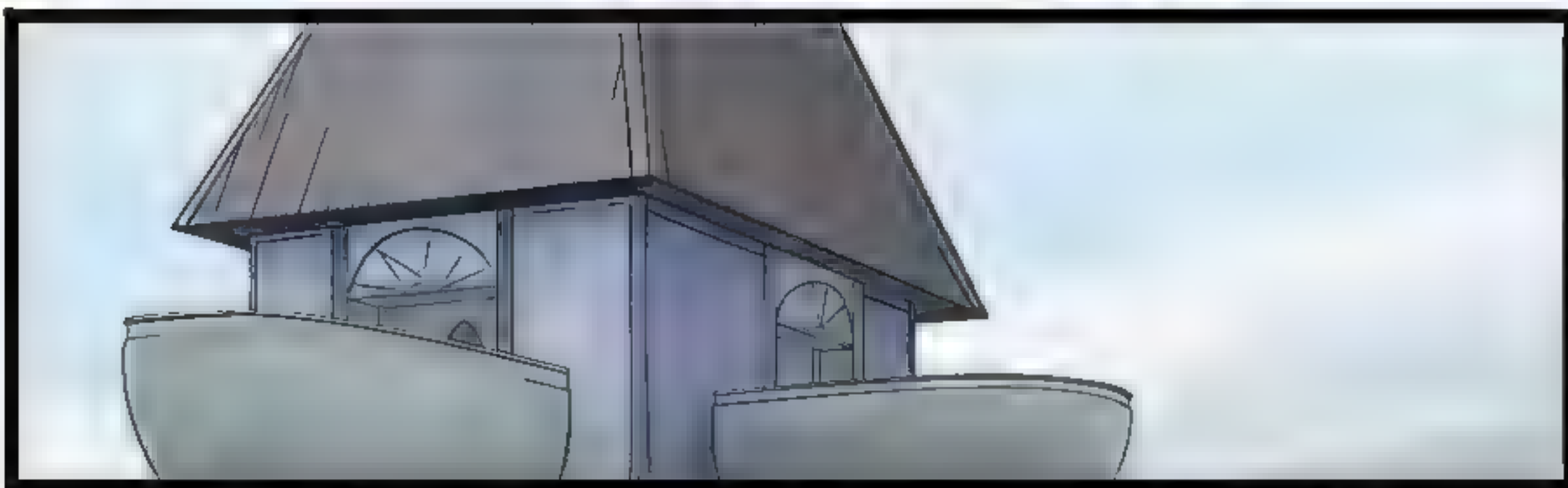
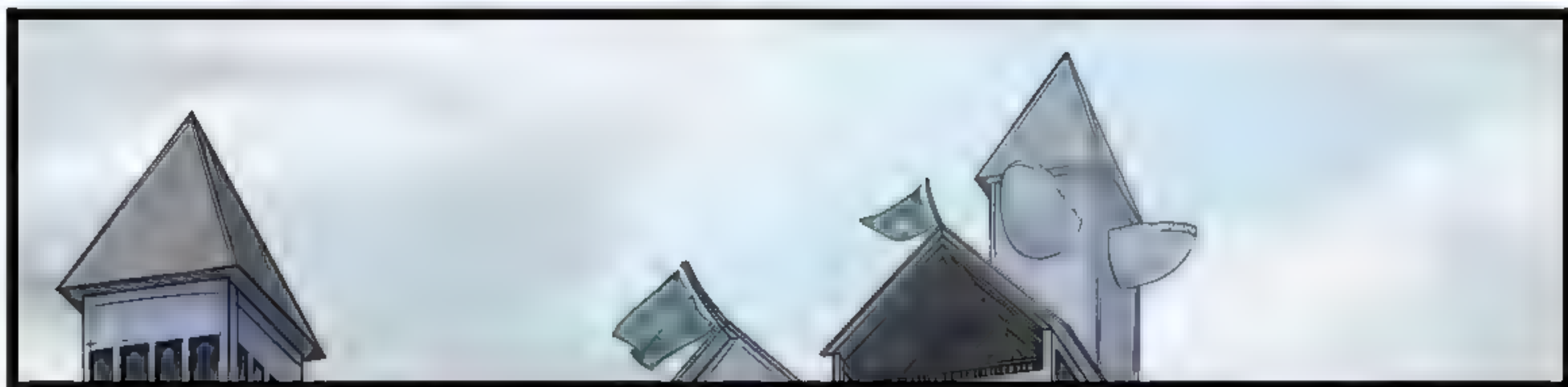
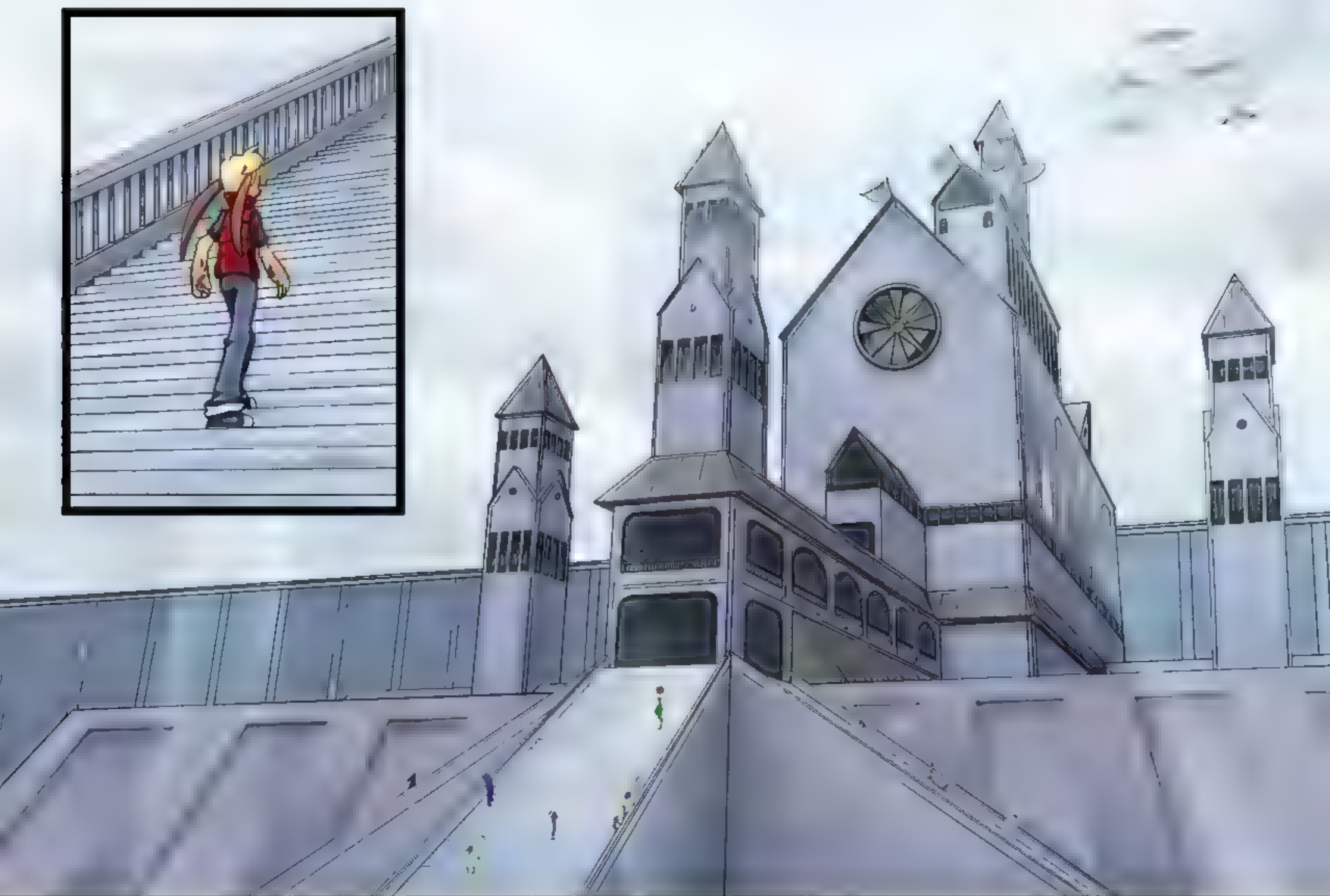
NOW, HOW
DO YOU THINK
KHEIL MAY WANT
TO CHANNEL HER
ENERGY...?













THEY CHALKED IT UP TO A WORKPLACE FLU. AND IT **COULD** BE THAT, BUT GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I'D LIKE TO TAKE SOME MORE PRECAUTIONS.

AGREED.



DO WHAT YOU THINK IS BEST, CHIEF. I WILL MAKE EMERGENCY PREPARATIONS. KEEP ME INFORMED.

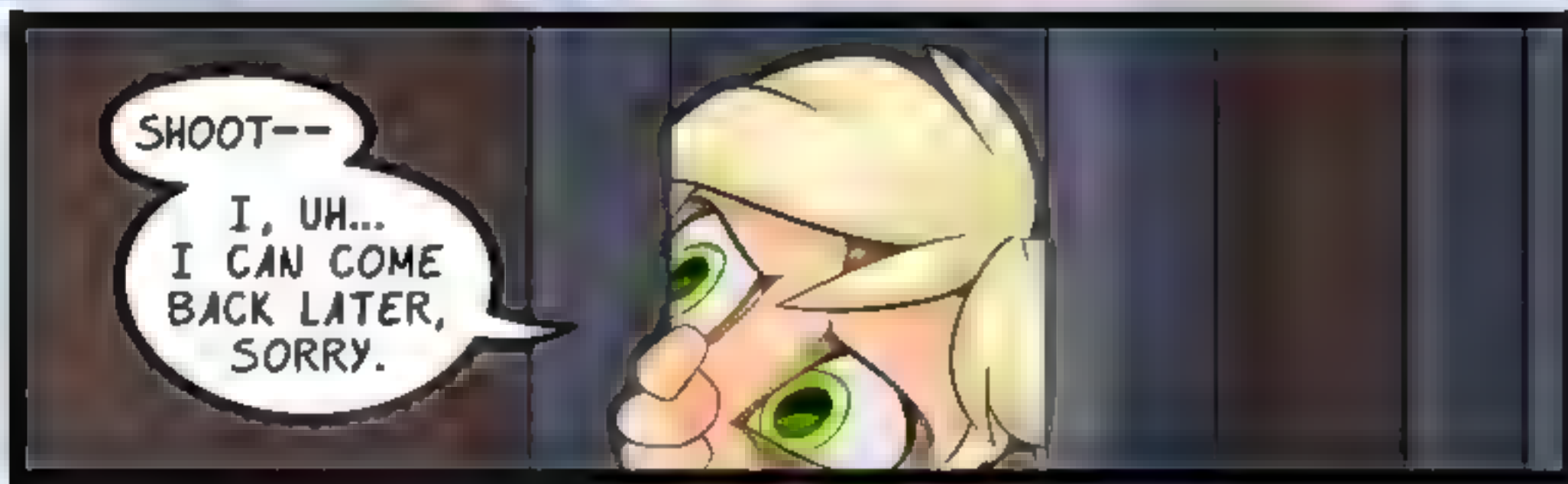
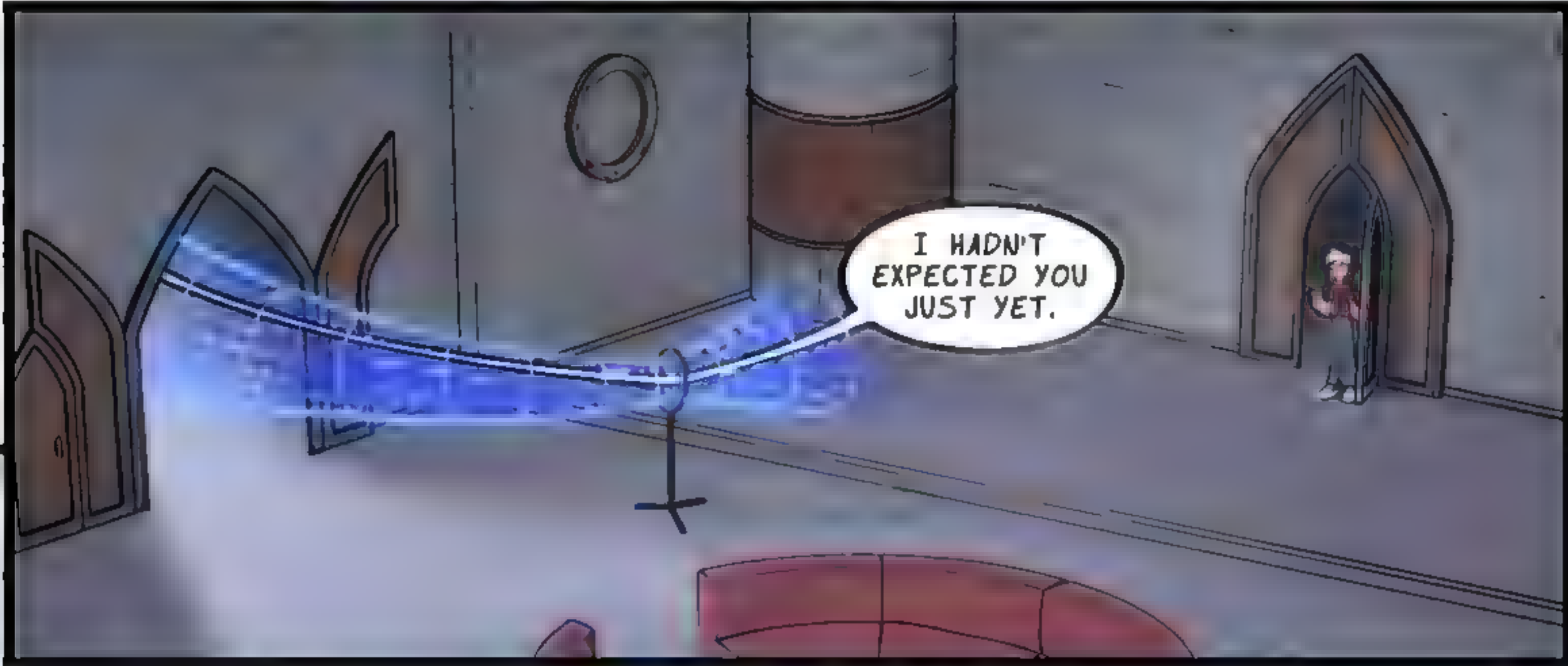
YES SIR.

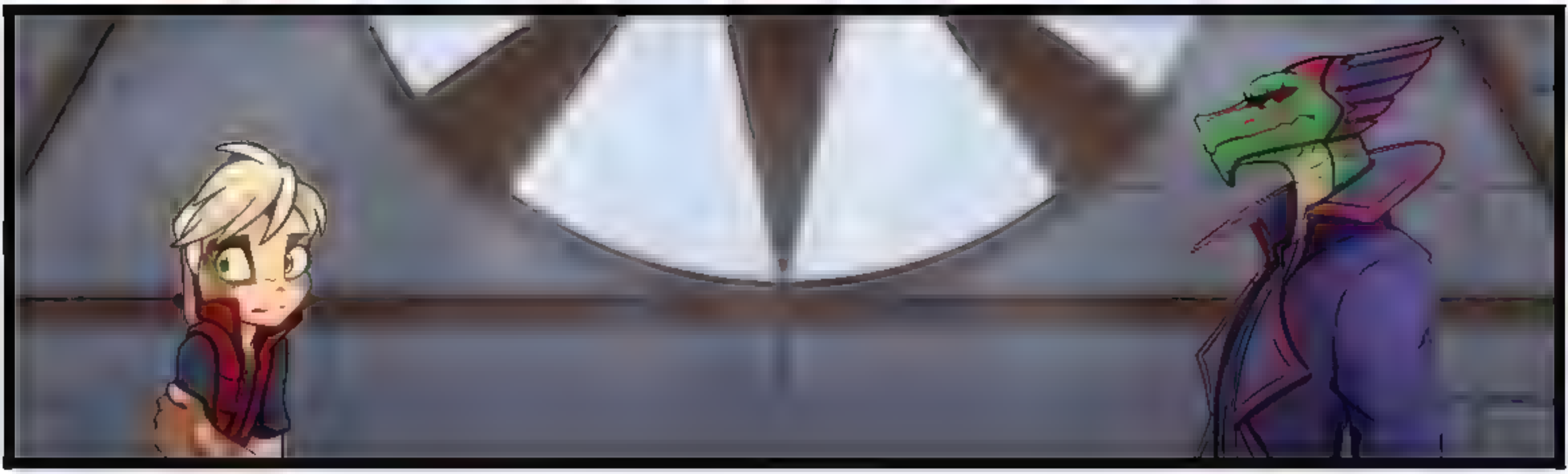
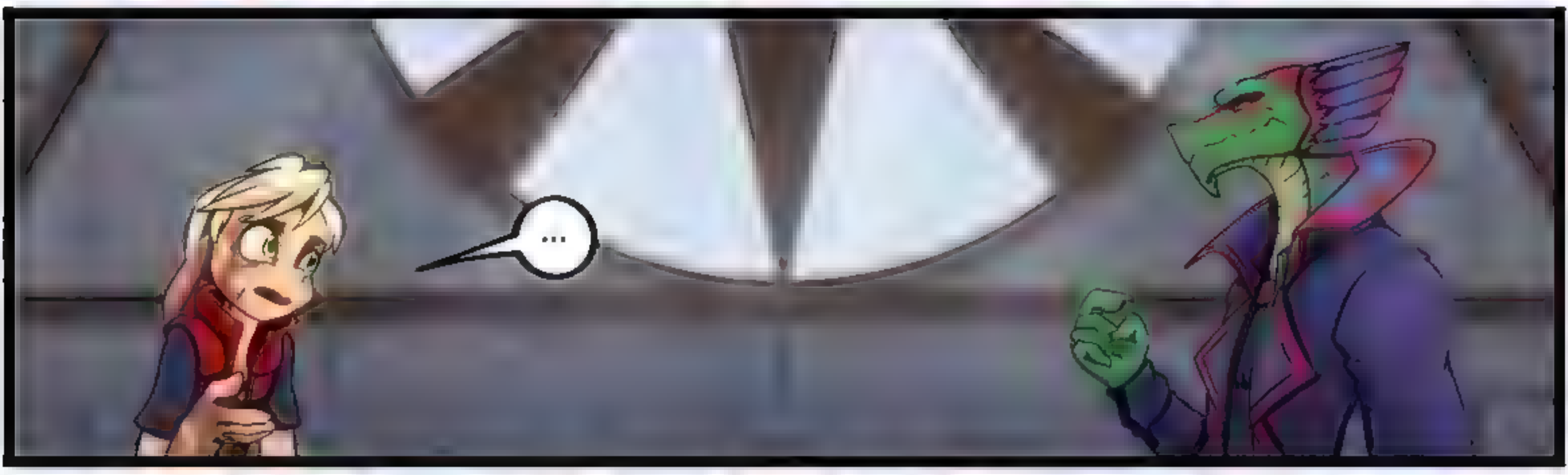
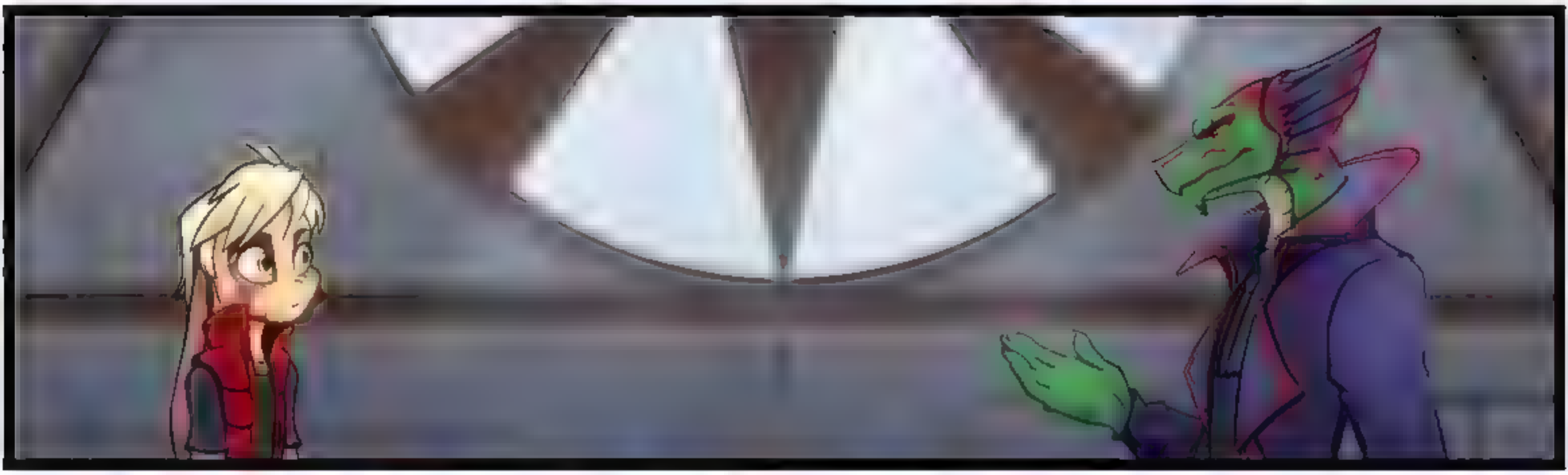
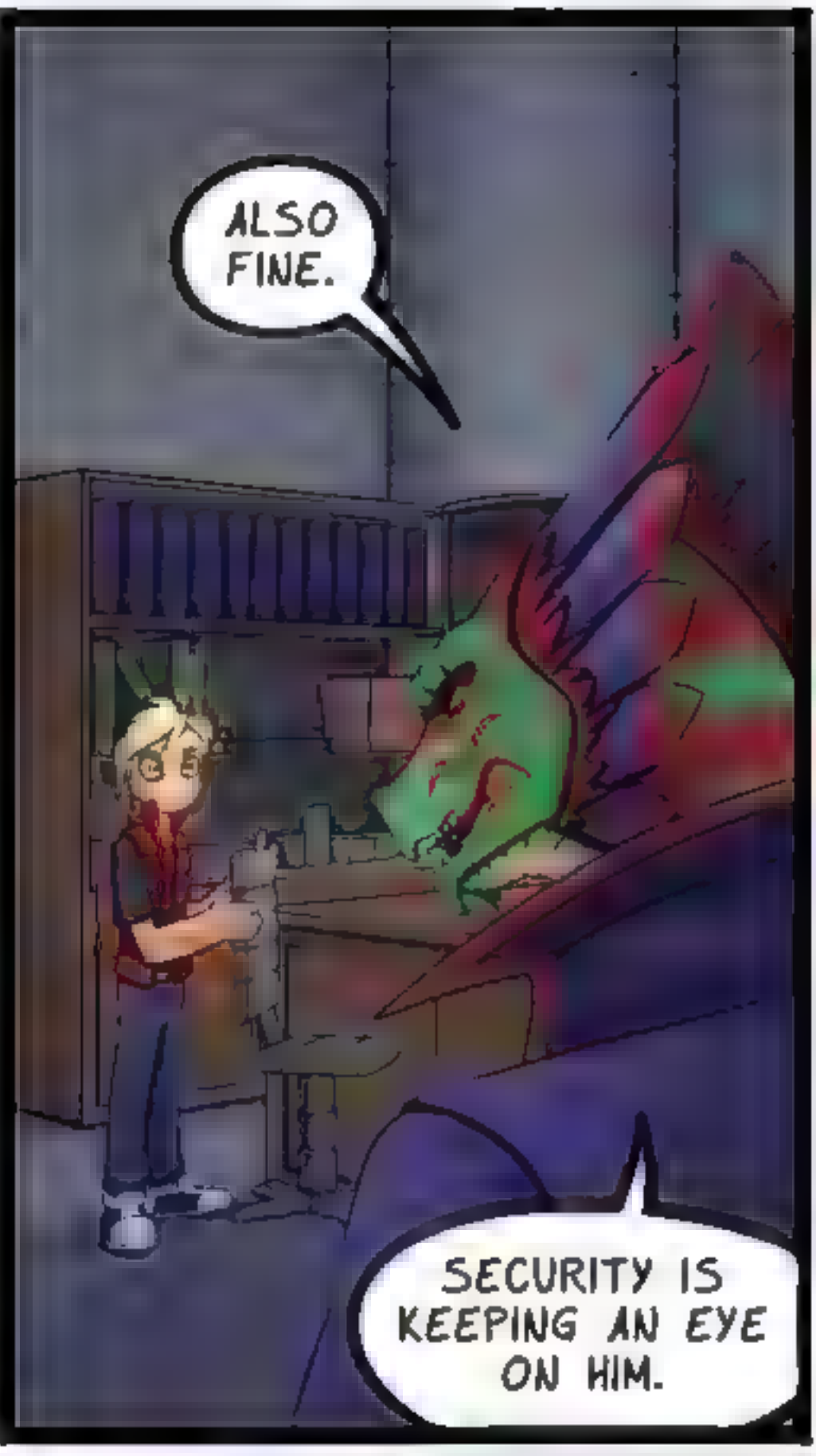


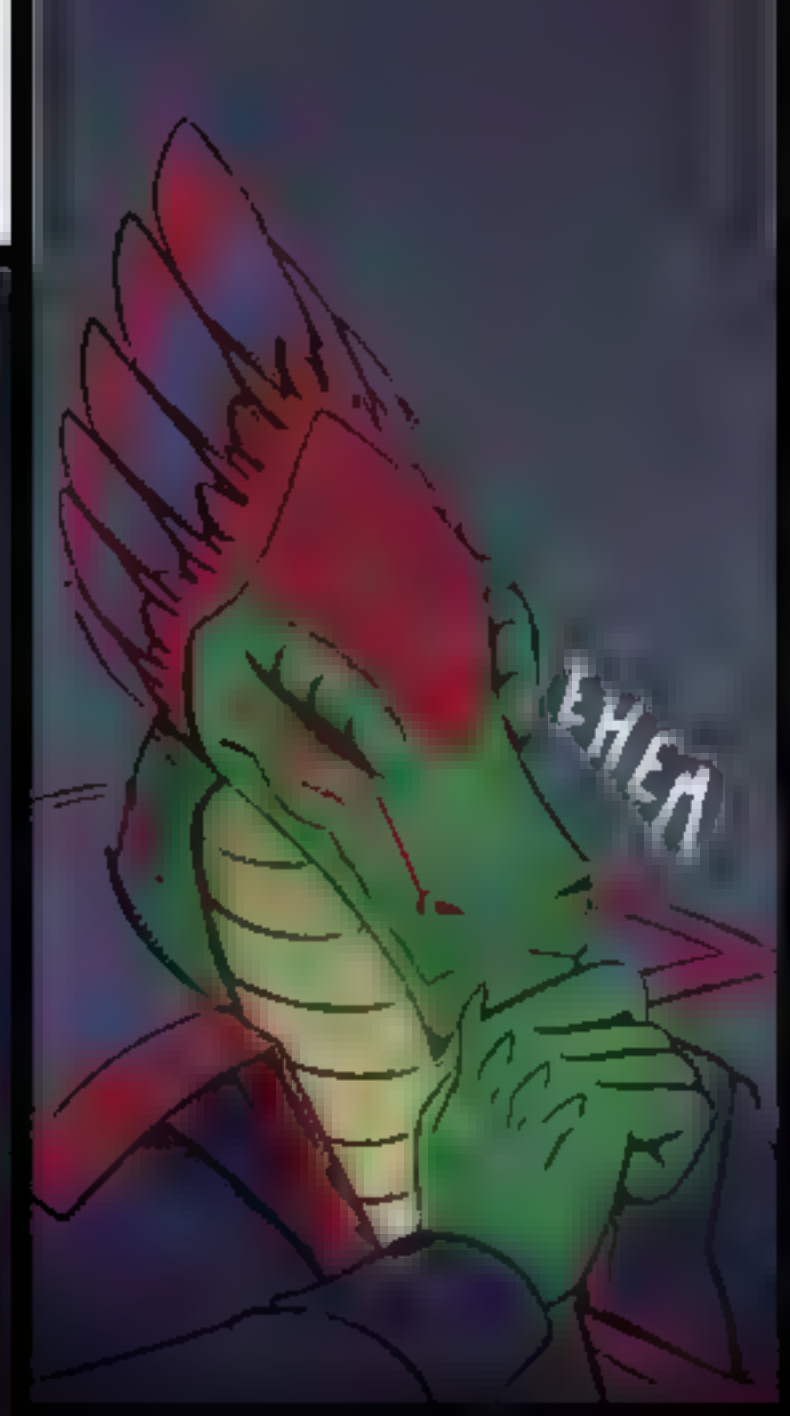
KNOCK
KNOCK

SIGH
ENTER!

Click





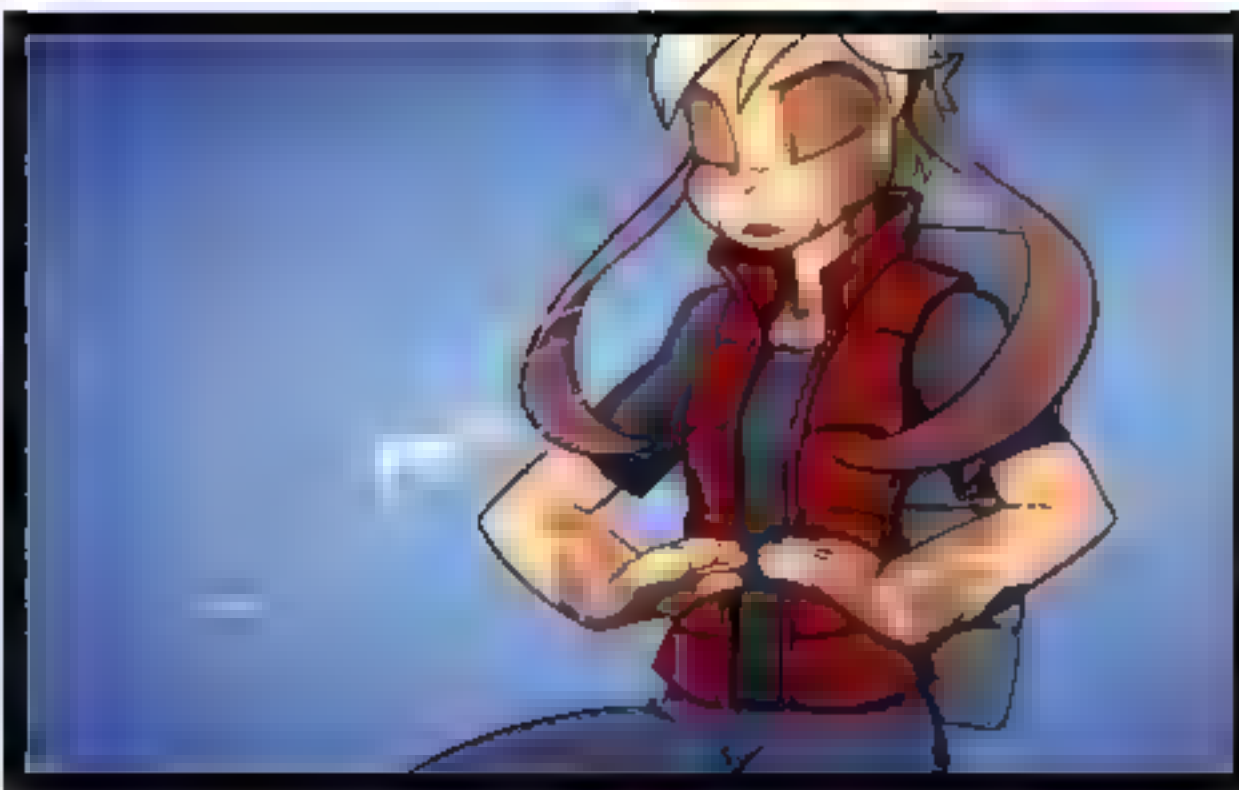
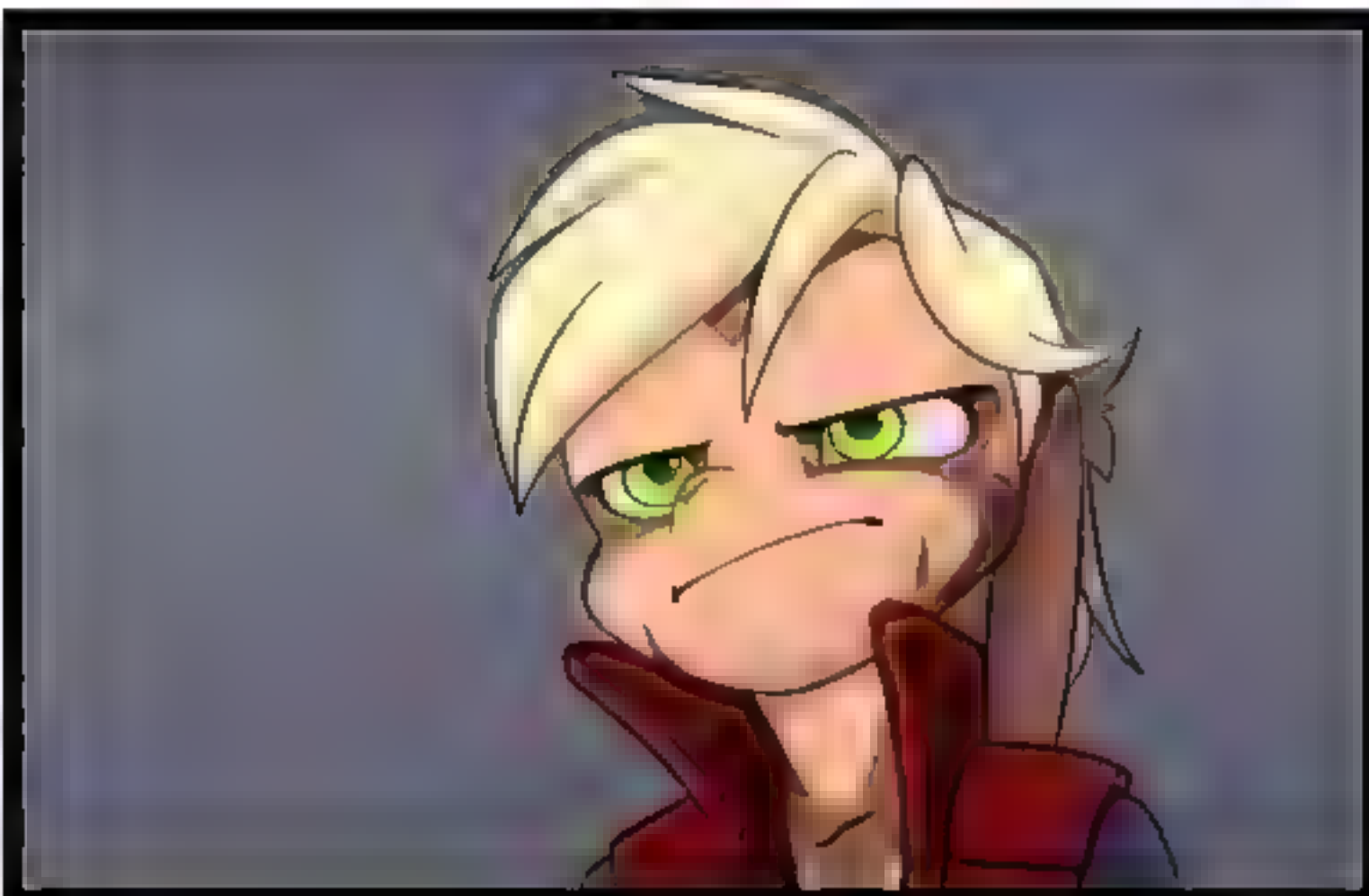


I HEAR THAT
YOU WISH TO GET
INVOLVED WITH
DORMITORY
SECURITY.

UH...
KINDA?



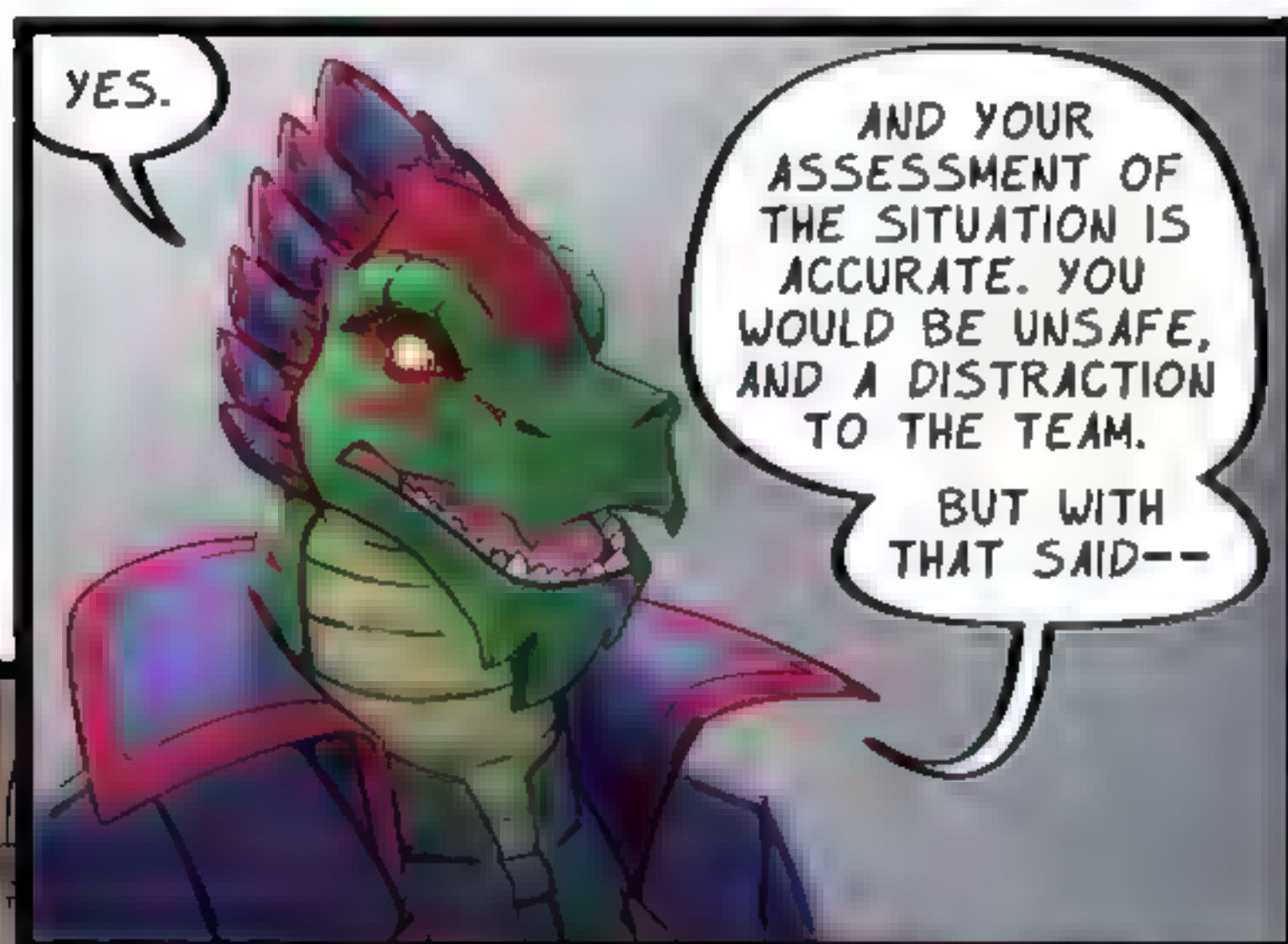
DO YOU
REALLY EXPECT
ME TO ALLOW
THIS?



NOT
REALLY,
NO.

IT'S UNSAFE,
AND THE SECURITY
TEAM NEEDS
TO FOCUS.

BUT AL SAID
SOMETHING ABOUT
AN ALTERNATIVE?



YES.

AND YOUR
ASSESSMENT OF
THE SITUATION IS
ACCURATE. YOU
WOULD BE UNSAFE,
AND A DISTRACTION
TO THE TEAM.

BUT WITH
THAT SAID--



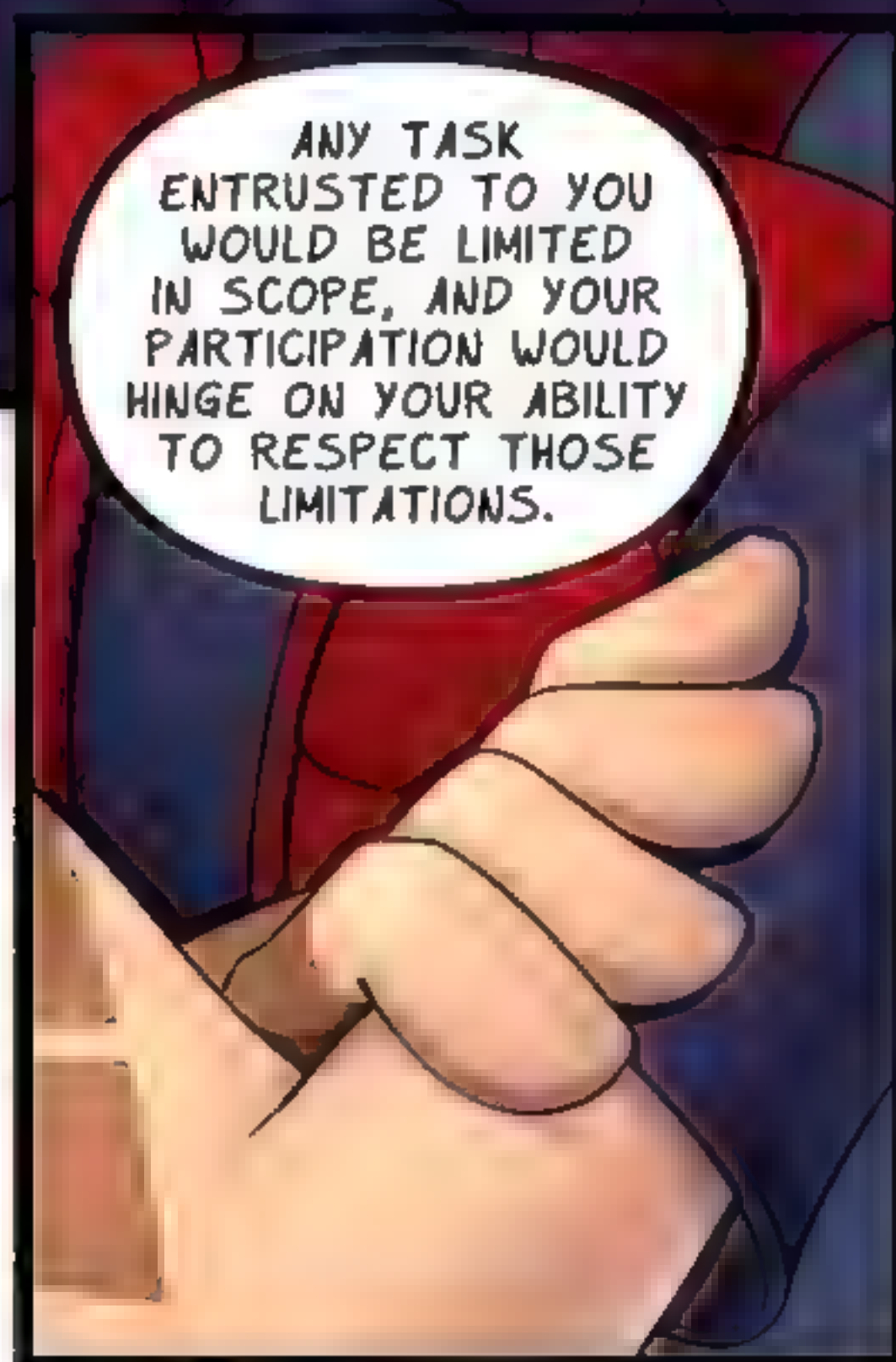
I BELIEVE
WE HAVE FOUND
A SOLUTION THAT
YOU WILL ENJOY.



NOW,
FIRST:

I NEED TO
MAKE IT CLEAR THAT
THIS IS **NOT** ABOUT
CATCHING VILLAINS.

WE ARE TRYING
TO DETERMINE WHAT
SECURITY BREACHES WE
FACE, AND HOW DEEP
THEY RUN, SO THAT
WE CAN TAKE PROPER
COUNTERMEASURES.



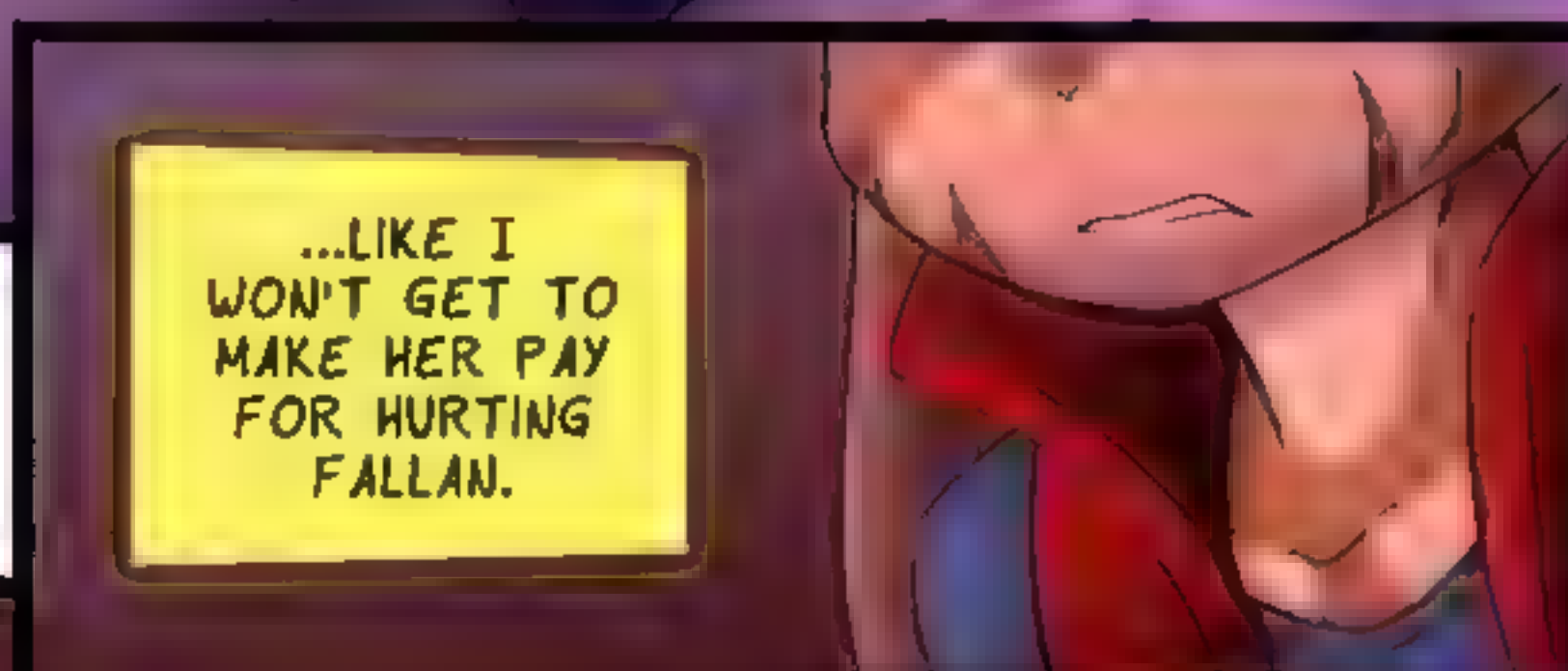
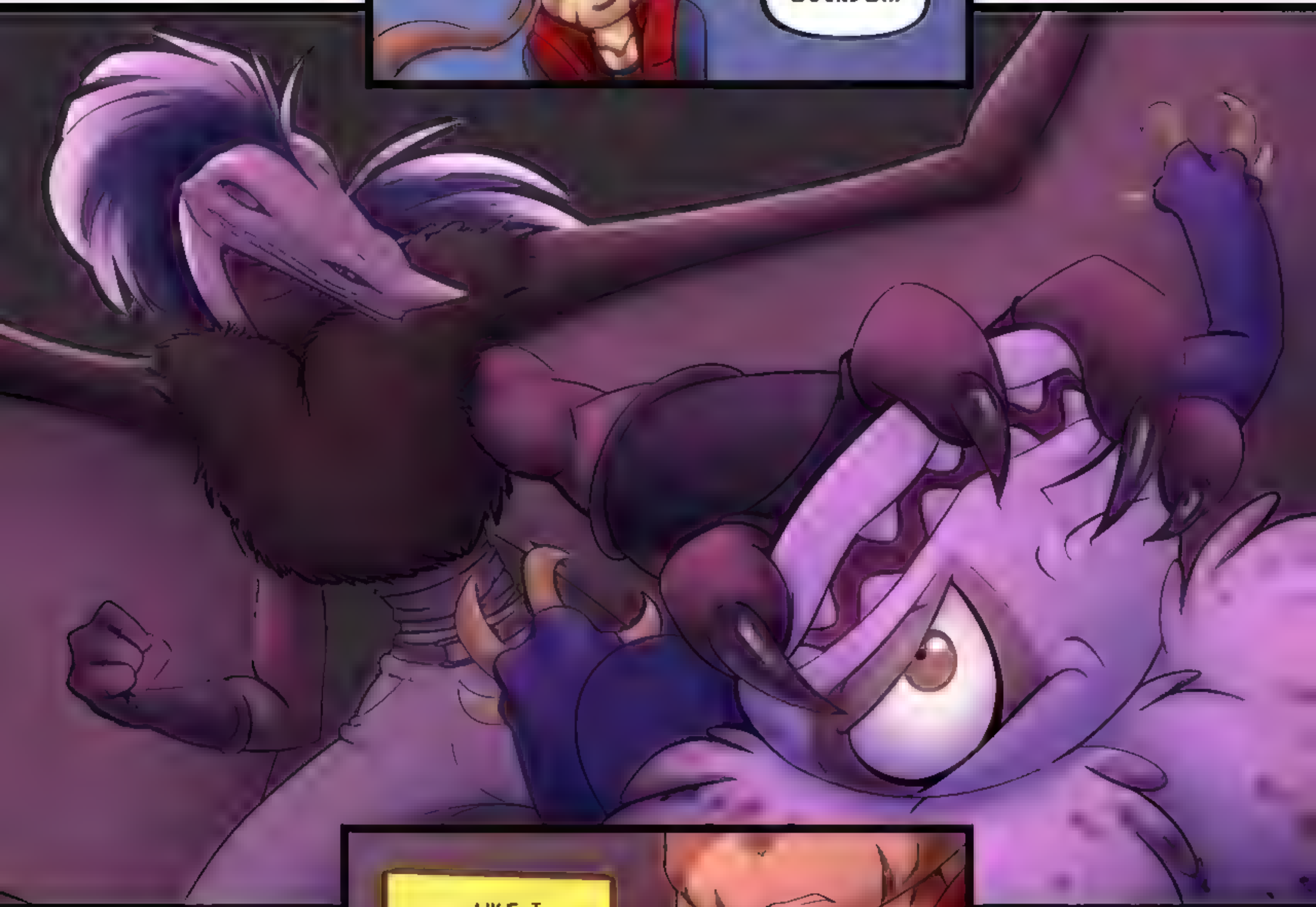
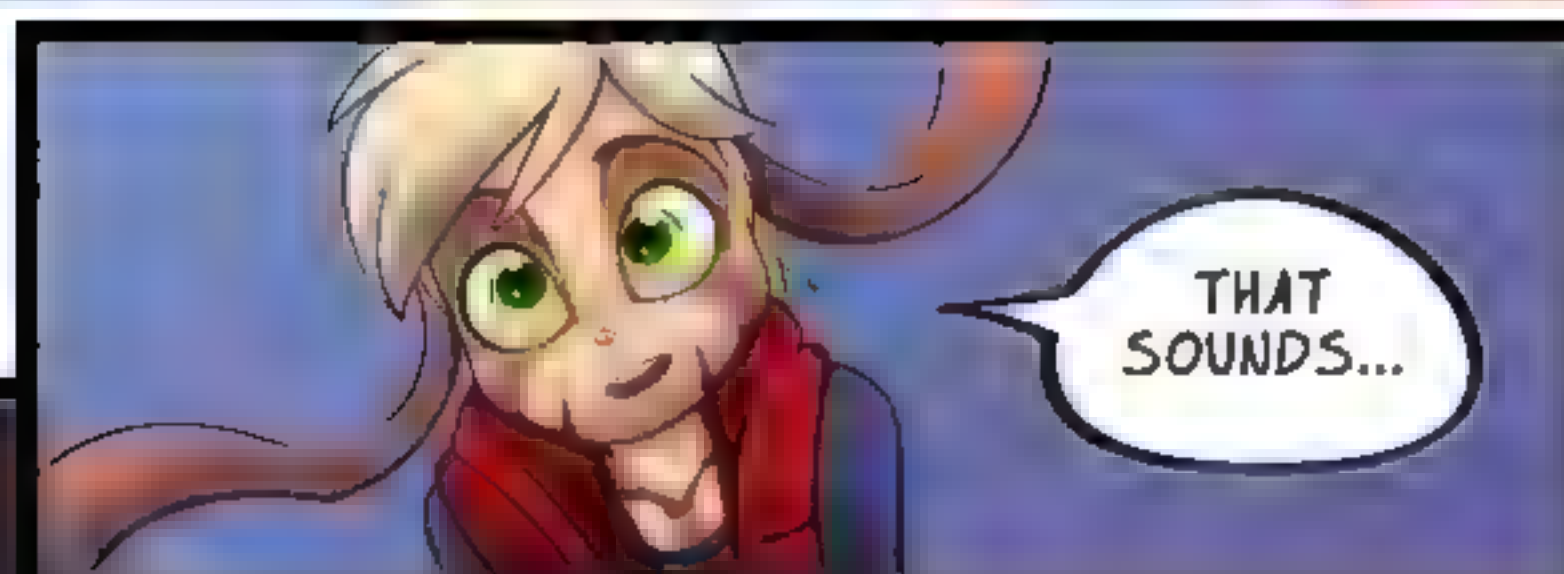
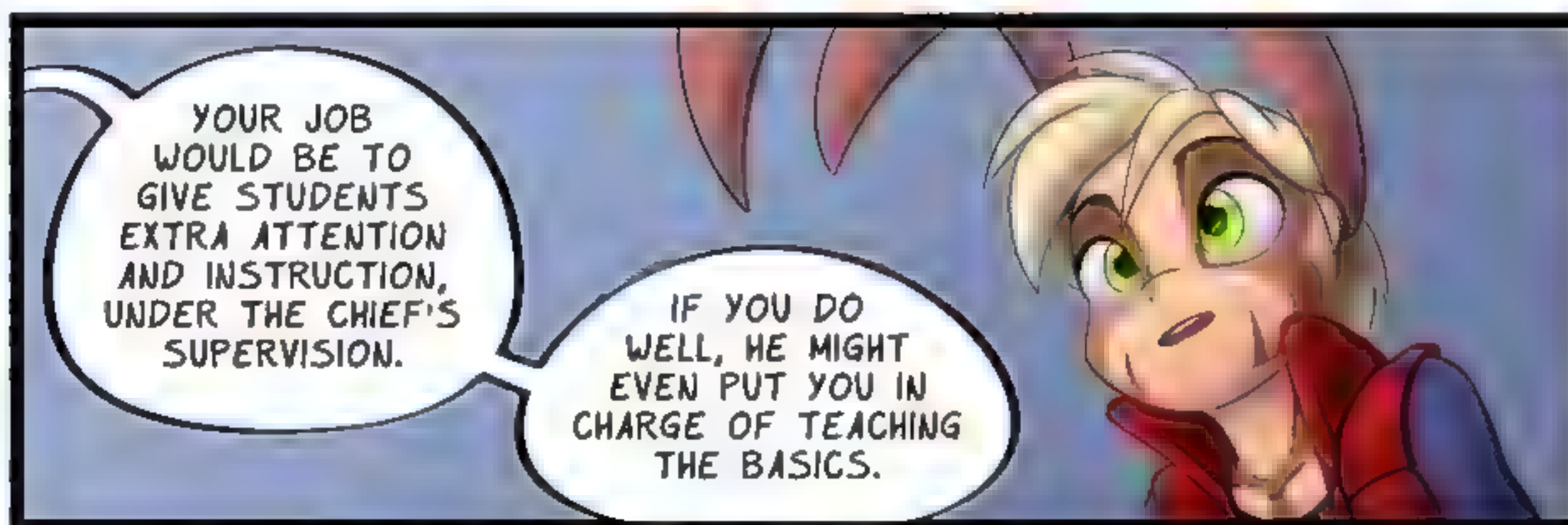
ANY TASK
ENTRUSTED TO YOU
WOULD BE LIMITED
IN SCOPE, AND YOUR
PARTICIPATION WOULD
HINGE ON YOUR ABILITY
TO RESPECT THOSE
LIMITATIONS.

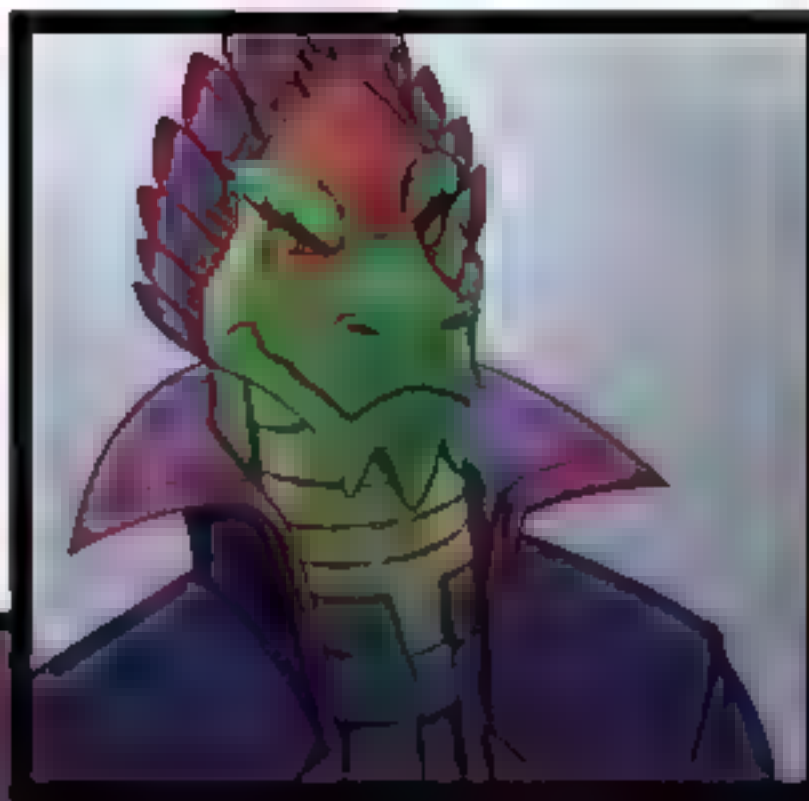


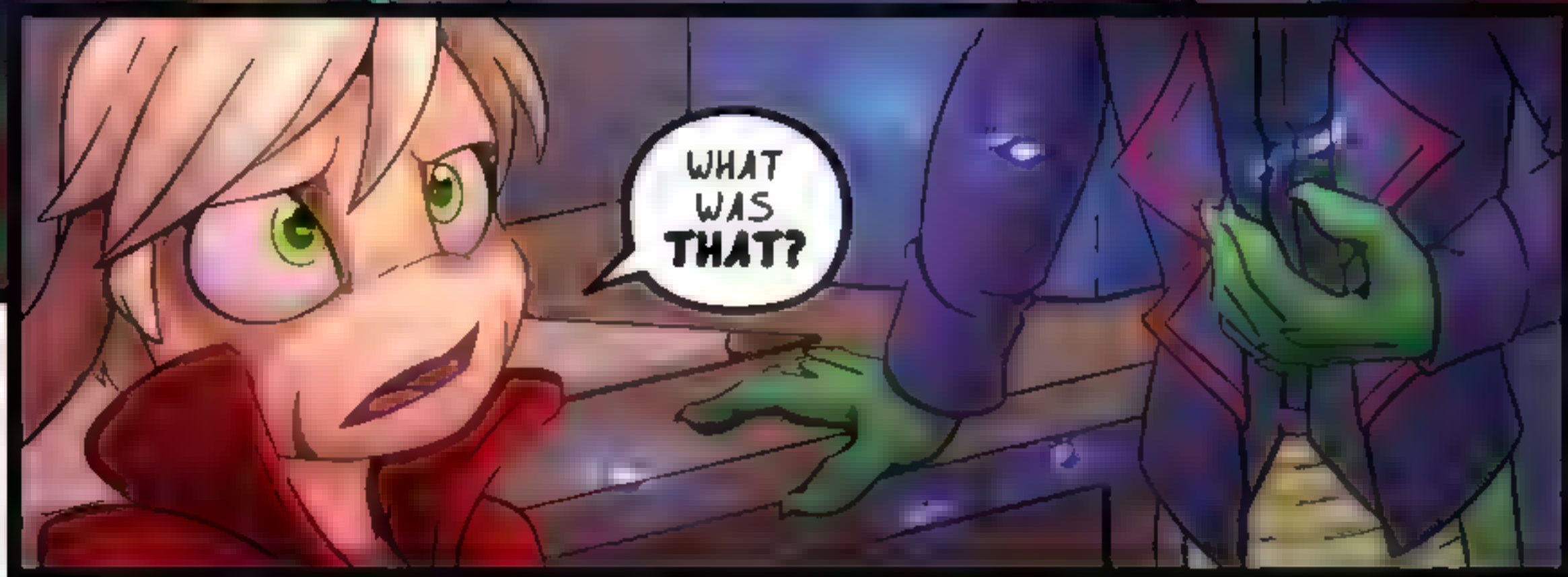
SO... BASICALLY I
TAKE WHAT'S OFFERED,
OR I GET SIDELINED
AGAIN, RIGHT?

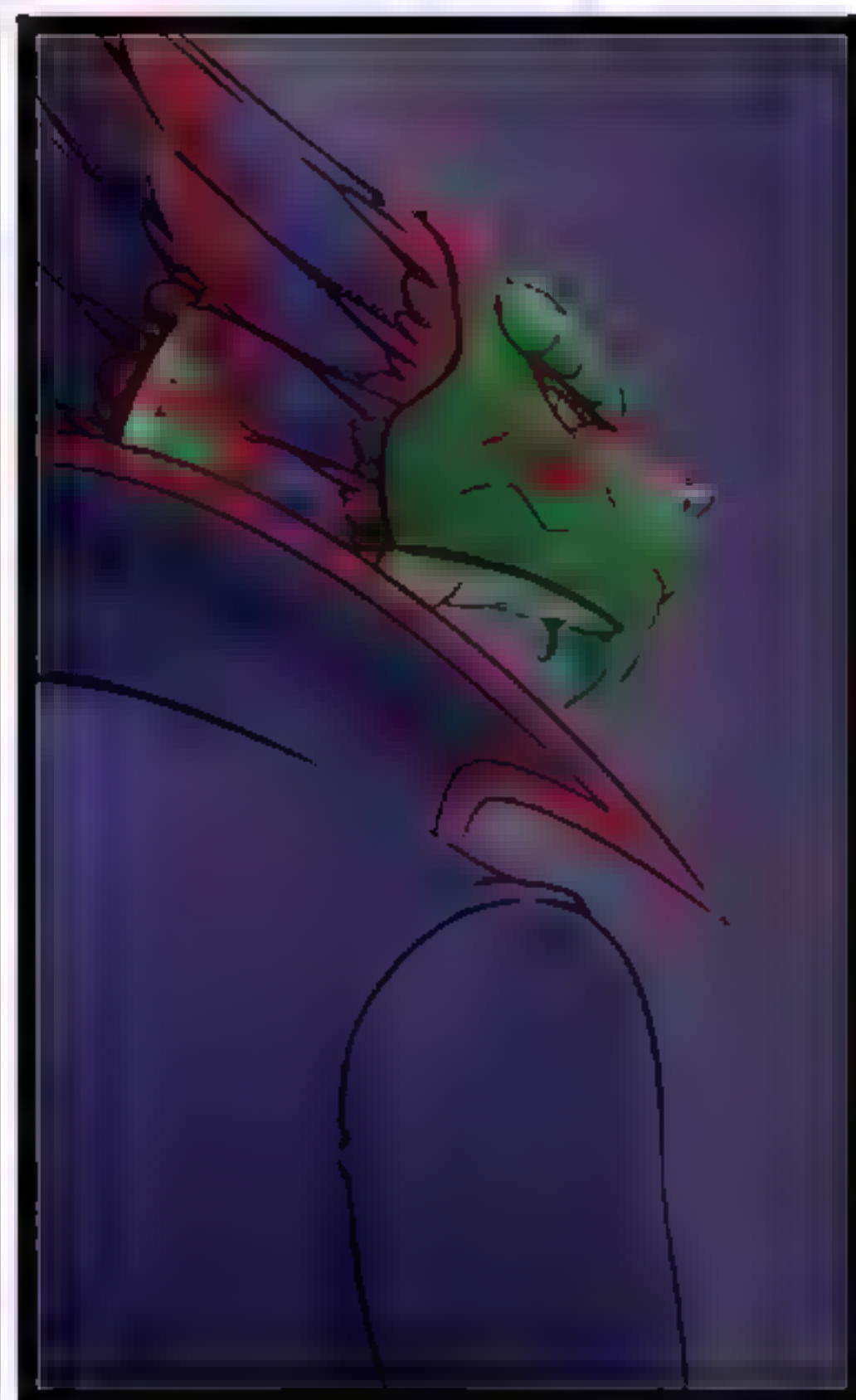
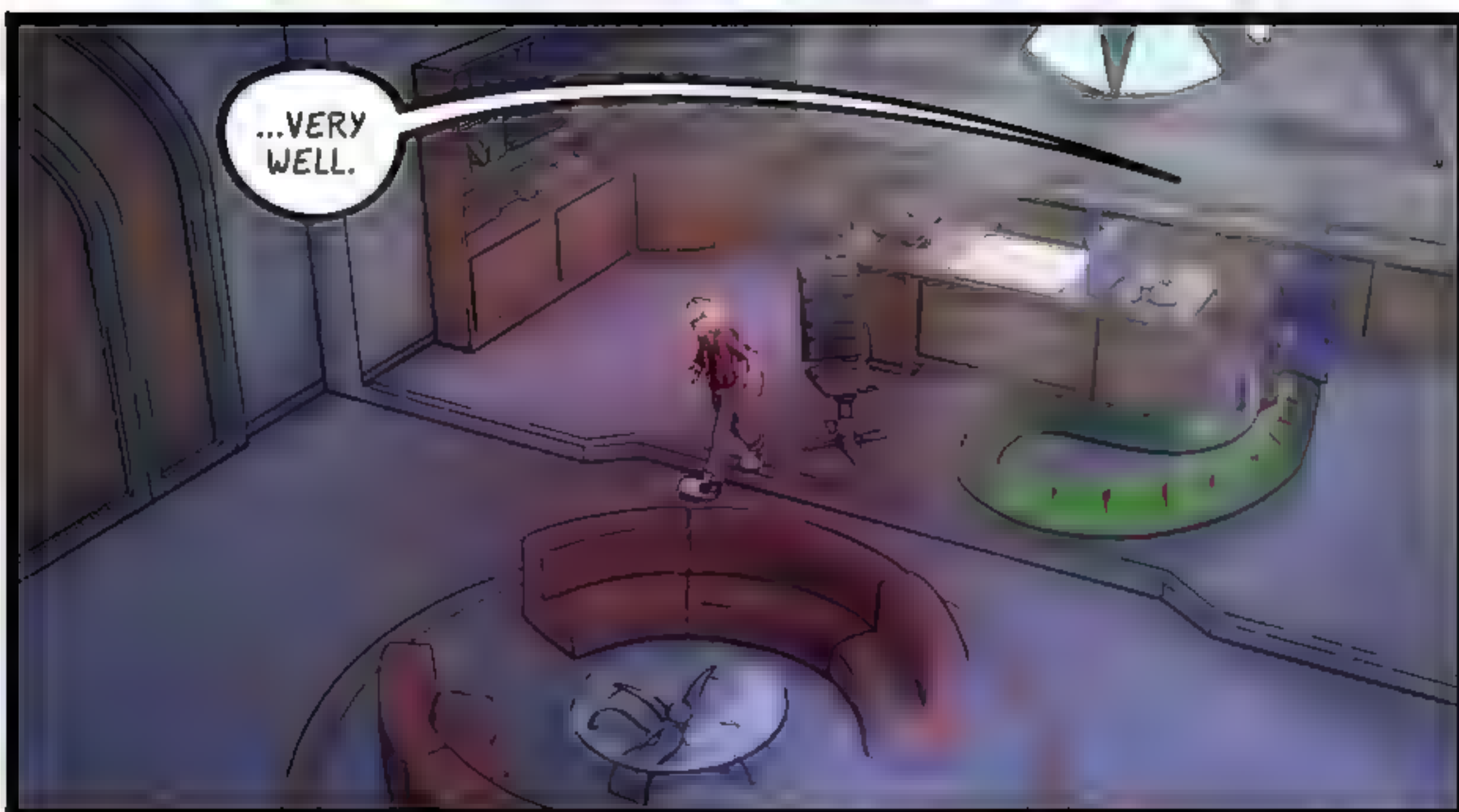
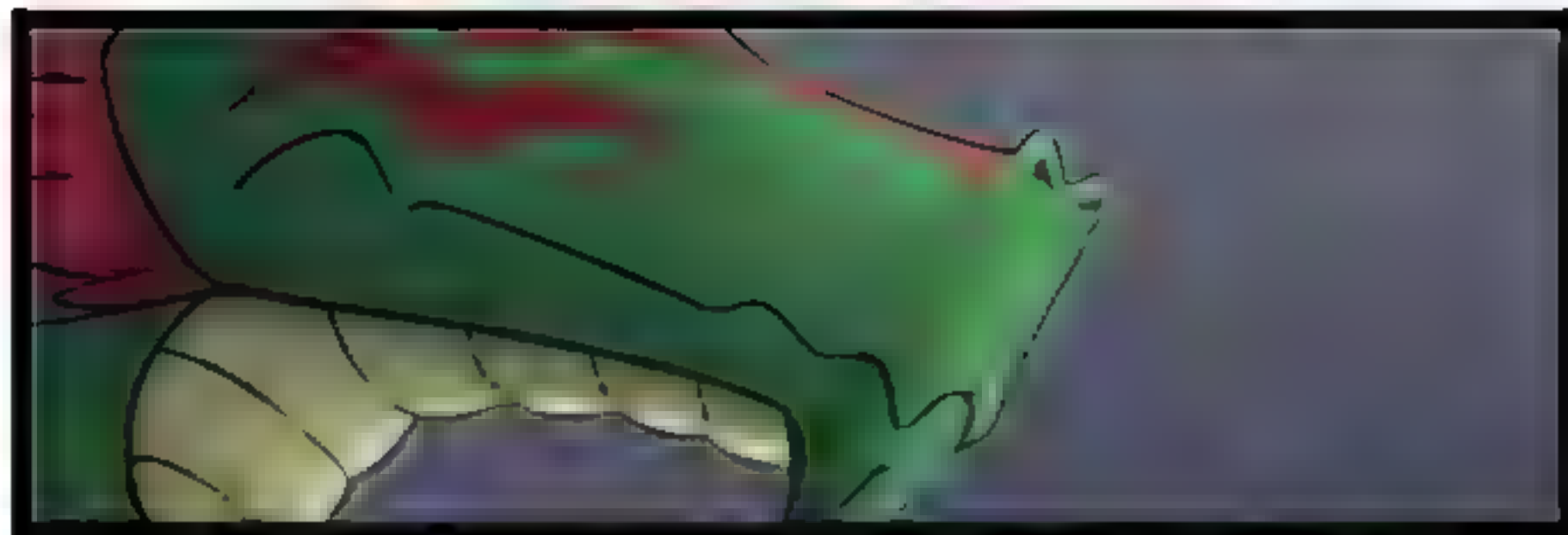
DO I HAVE
A CHOICE?

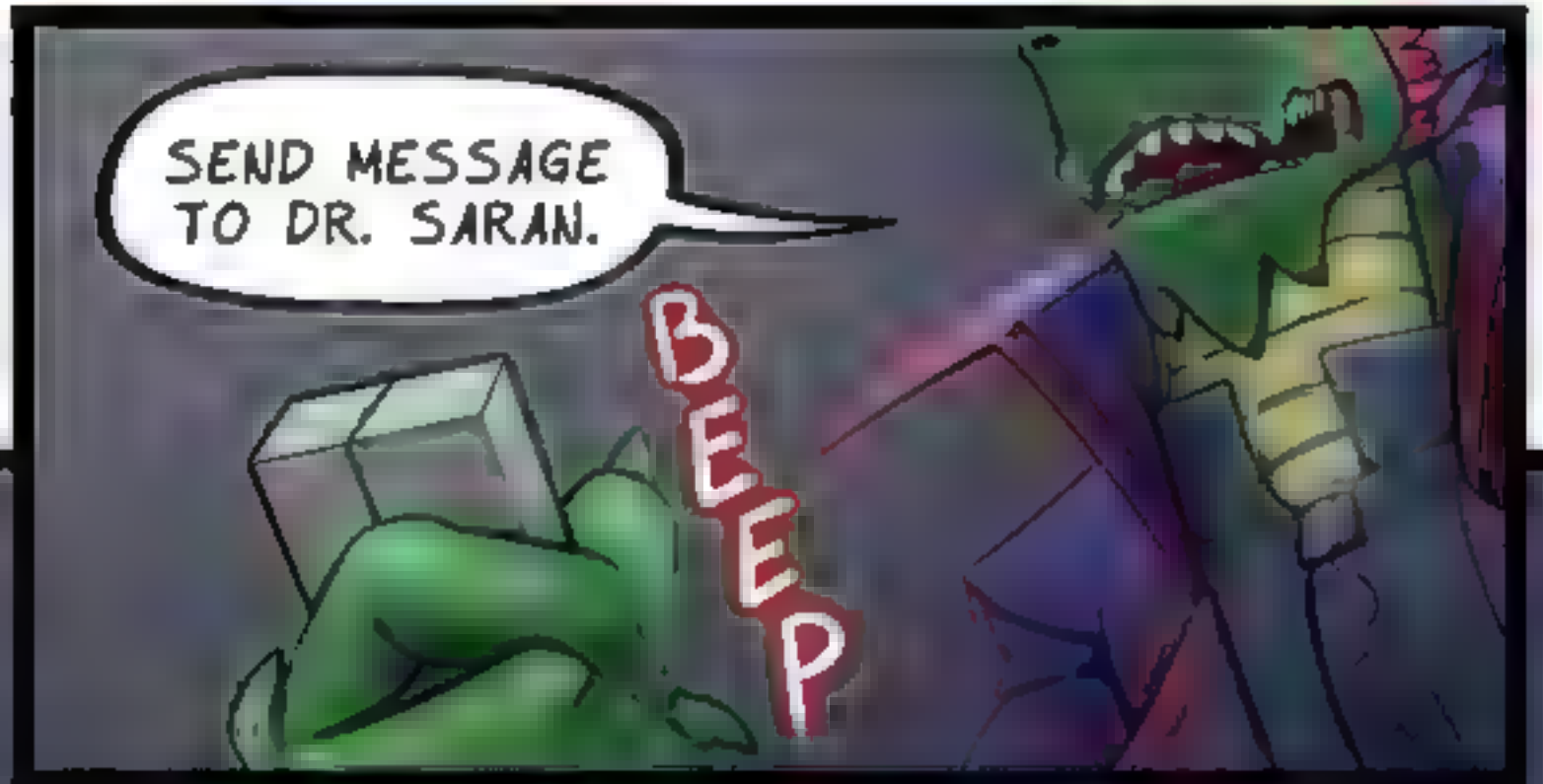
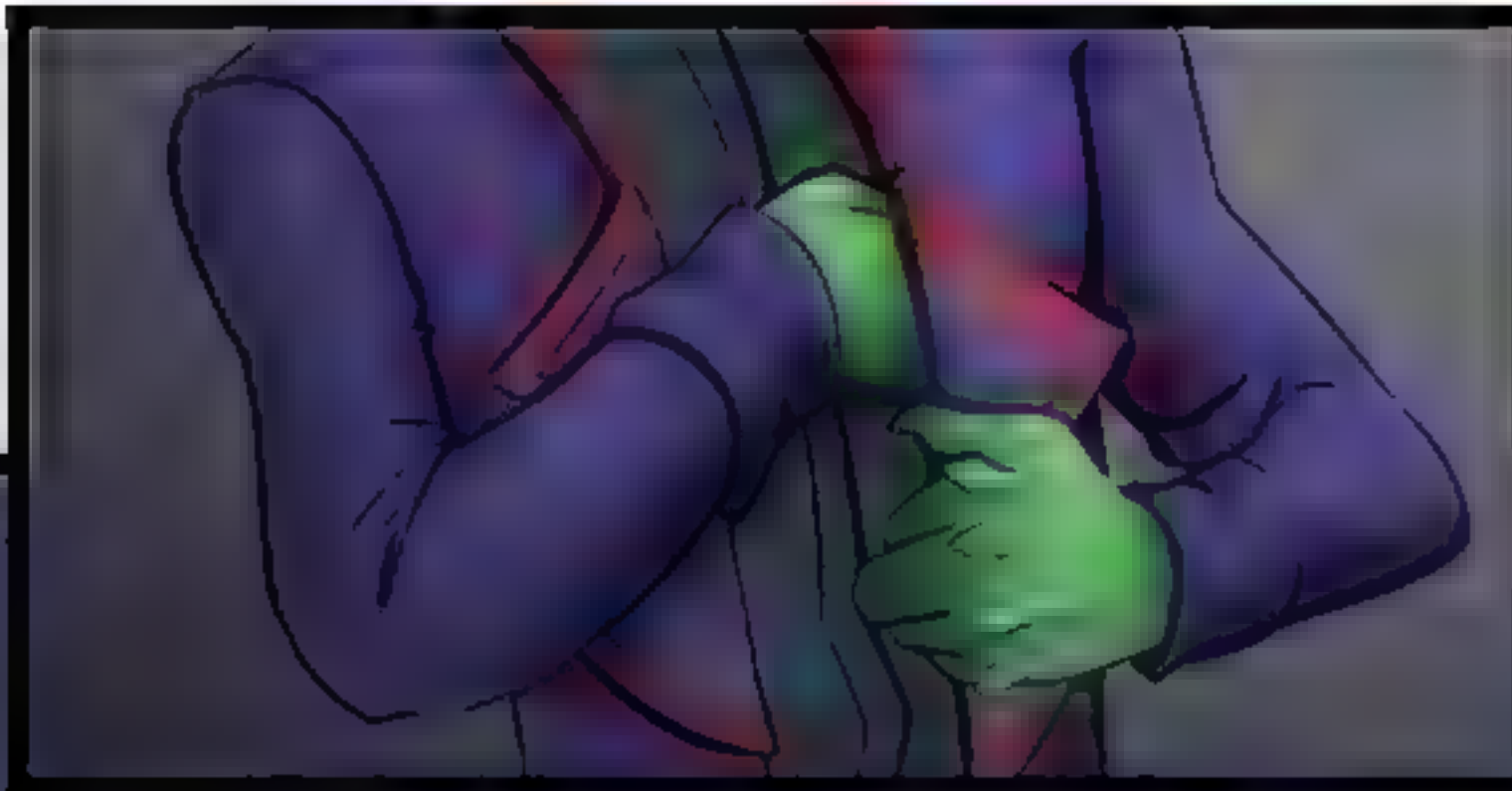
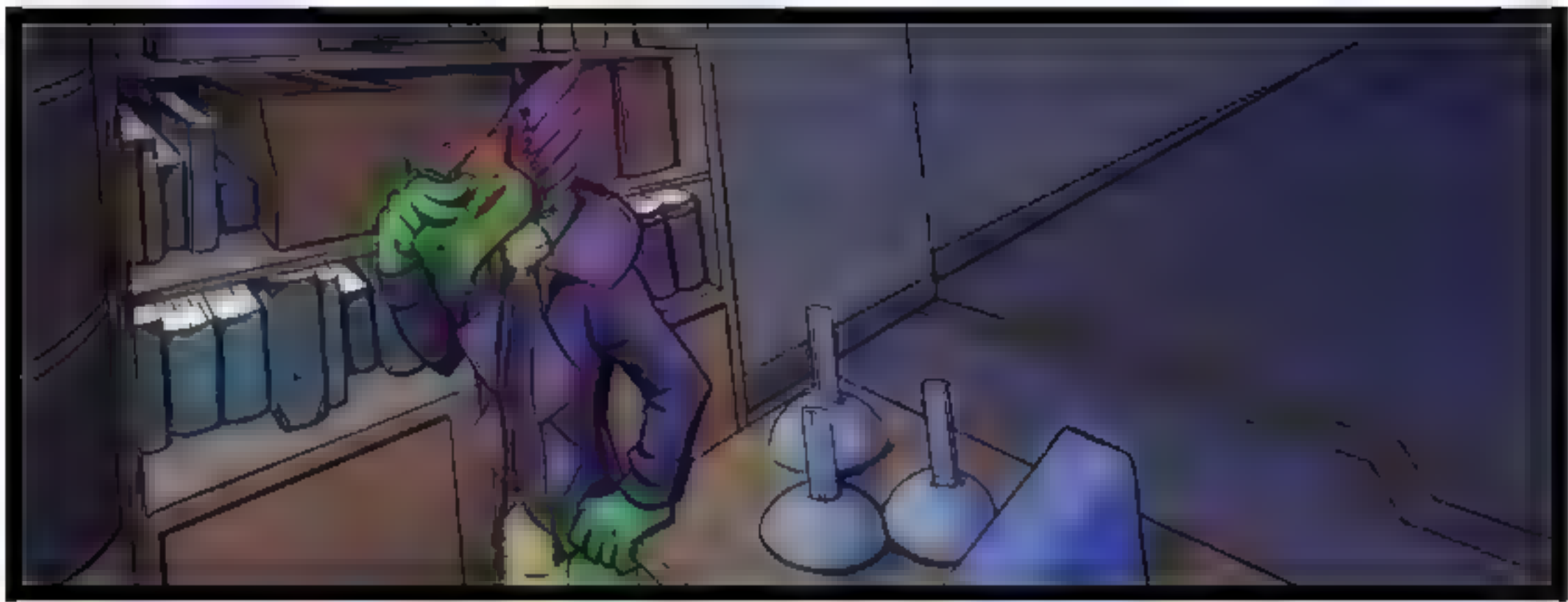


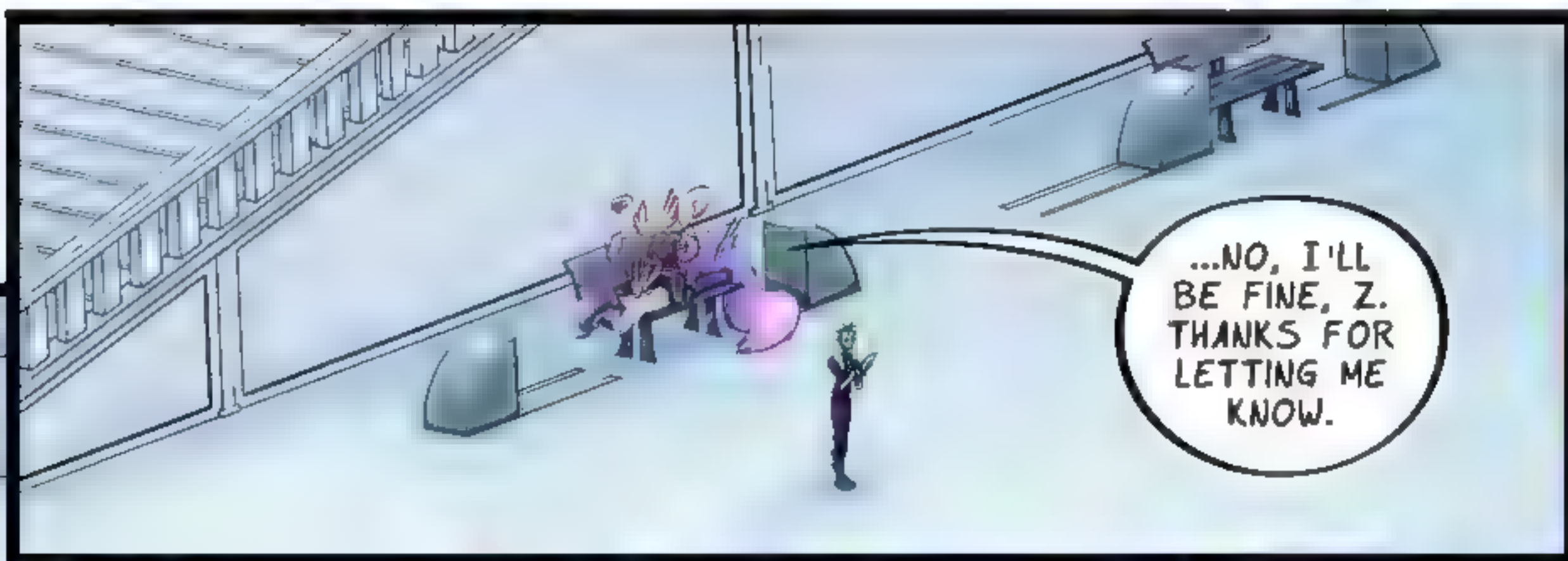












...NO, I'LL
BE FINE, Z.
THANKS FOR
LETTING ME
KNOW.



UUUUGH.

HEY, IT'S
OKAY! THIS GIVES
YOU MORE TIME
TO BREATHE.

MAYBE
TRY AGAIN
TOMORROW?



ACTUALLY, I
JUST CHECKED
WITH NAZURET'S
AUTO-SECRETARY.
LOOKS LIKE HE'S
FREE, NOW.

YOU REALLY
SHOULD GO SEE
HIM, OZ.



BUT I
LIKE BEING
ALIVE!



THIS IS IRRATIONAL.



YEAH, THEY'RE RIGHT.

WHAT'S HE GONNA DO? TELL YOU HOW BAD YOU LOOK IN THESE DUMB UNIFORMS HE DESIGNED?



"A STUDENT OF MERIT WOULD KNOW YOUR PALETTE'S DOMINANT COLOR IS NOT **PURPLE**."

"IT IS NOT **MAUVE**, OR EVEN **LAVENDER**."

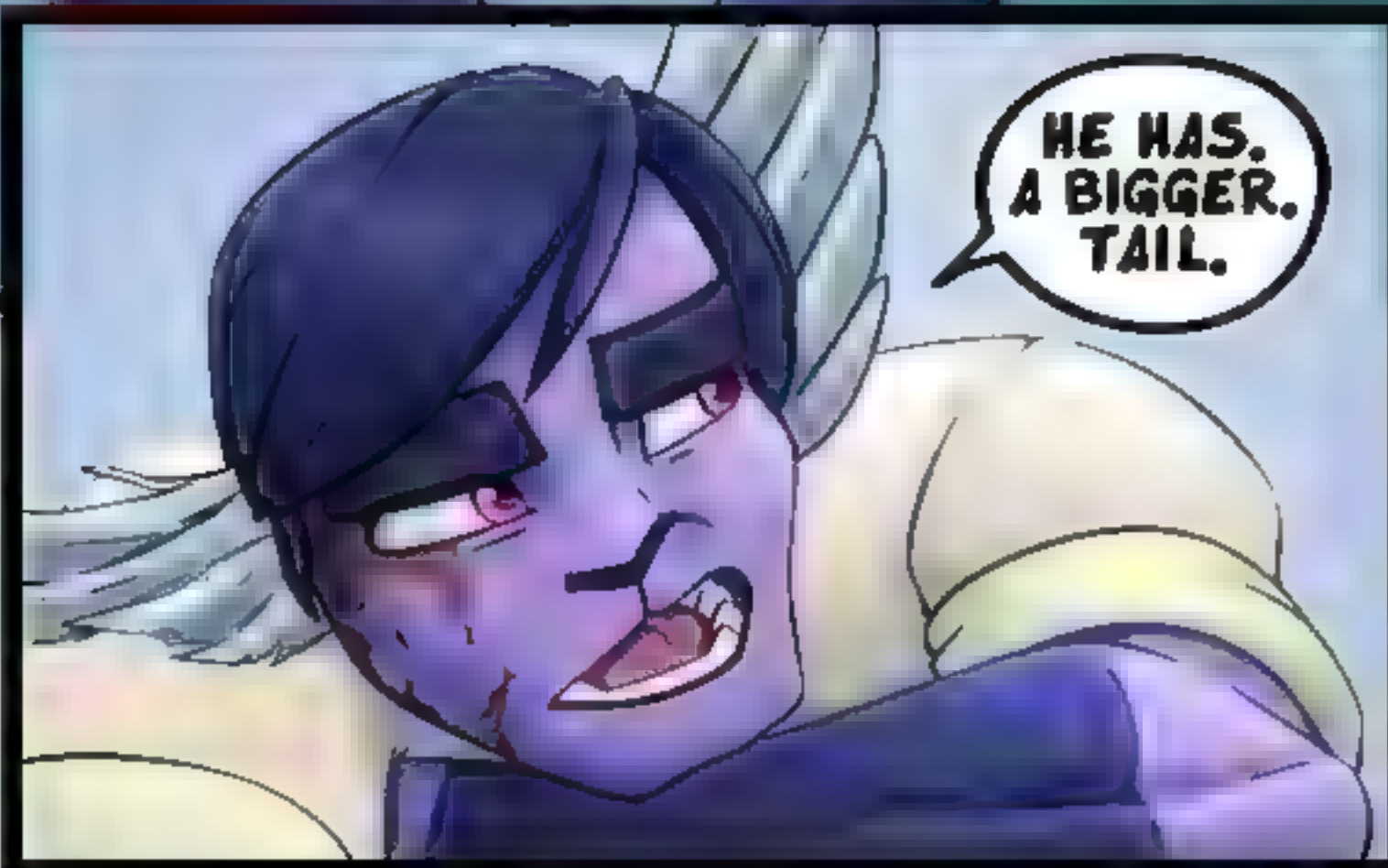
"IT IS **LILAC**, AND IT FAILS TO CONTRAST PROPERLY WITH THIS FABRIC."

"I WOULD KNOW, I'M **KRAON NAZURET** AND I OWN A MASSIVE FASHION EMPIRE."

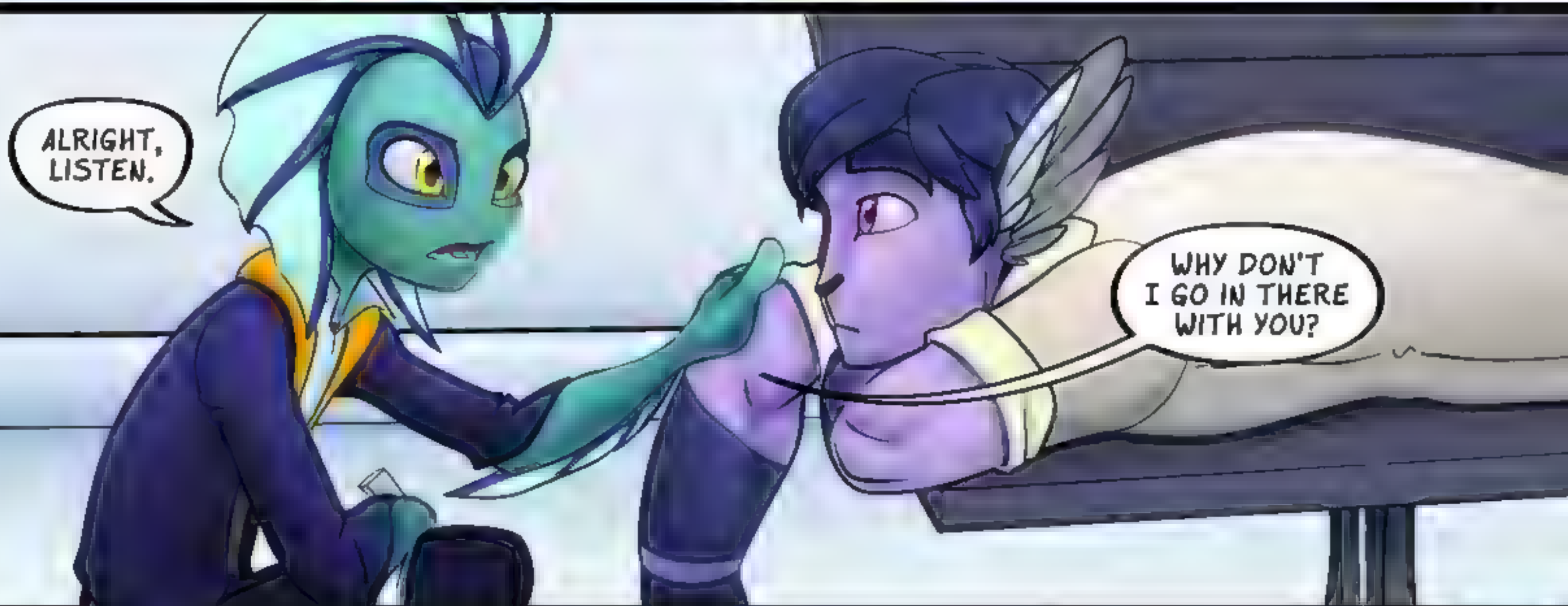
"YOU FAIL! GET OUT OF MY SCHOOL!"



BESIDES, HE CAN'T *HIT* YOU OR ANYTHING. AND IF HE TRIES, JUST SLAP HIM WITH YOUR TAIL!

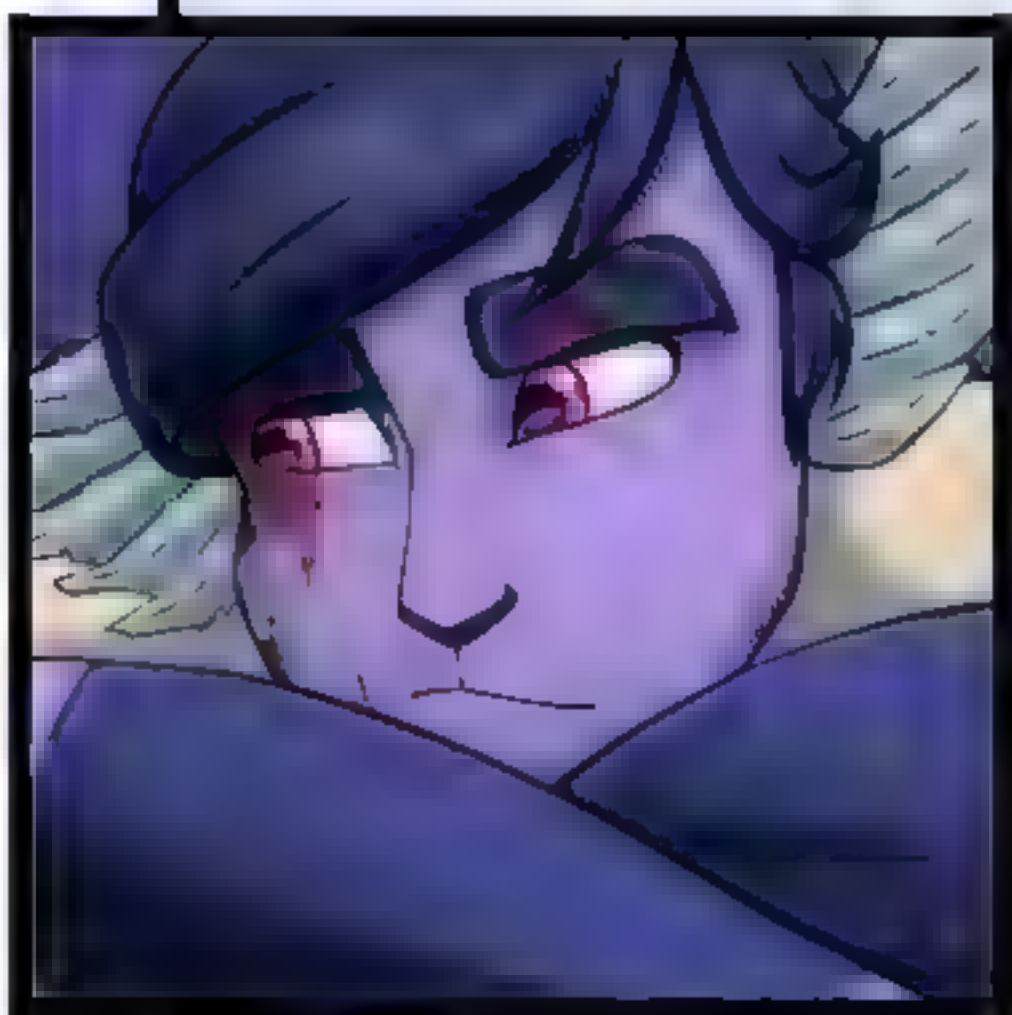


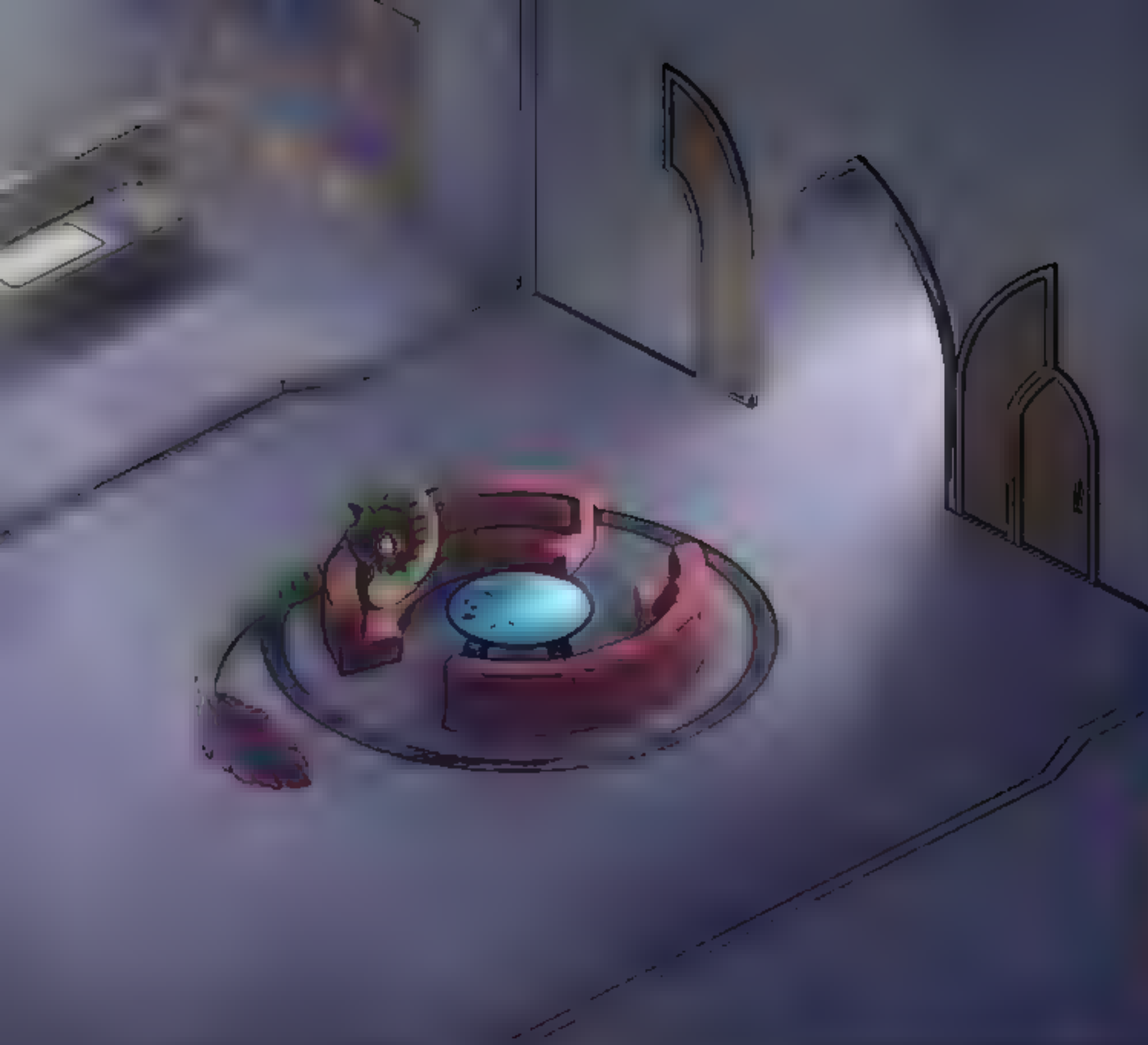
HE HAS A BIGGER TAIL.



ALRIGHT, LISTEN.

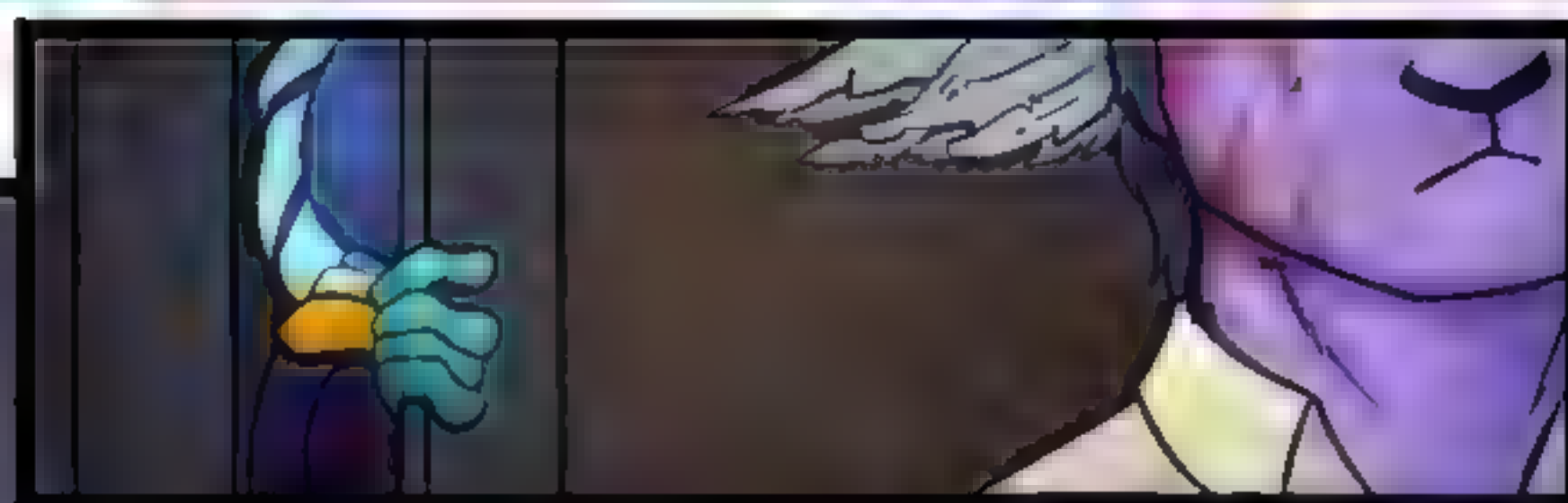
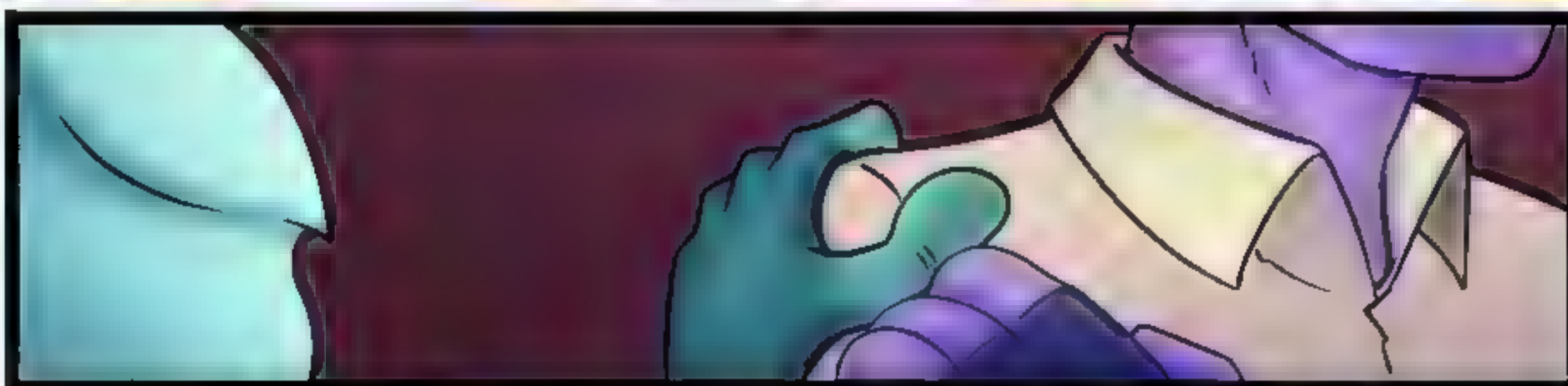
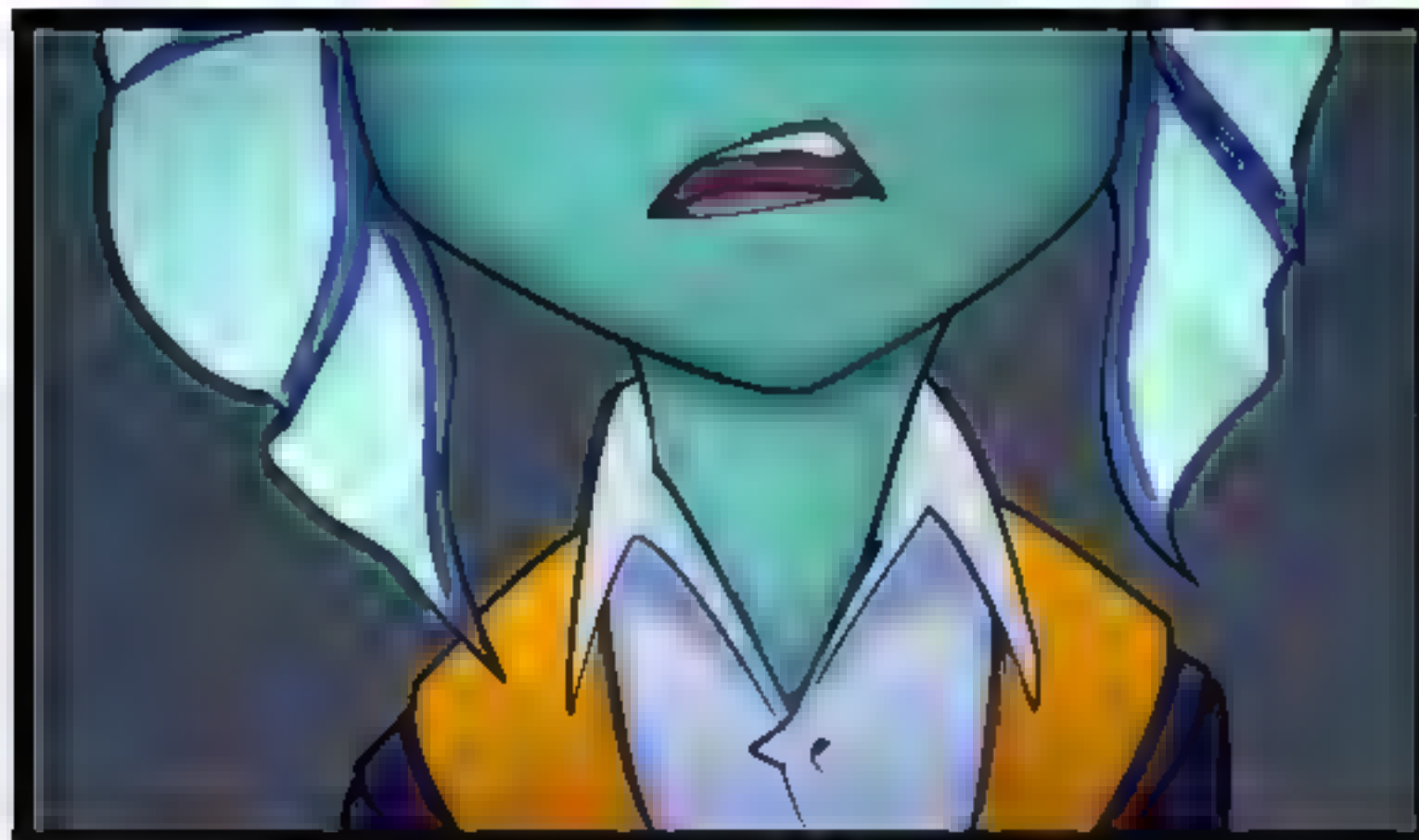
WHY DON'T I GO IN THERE WITH YOU?

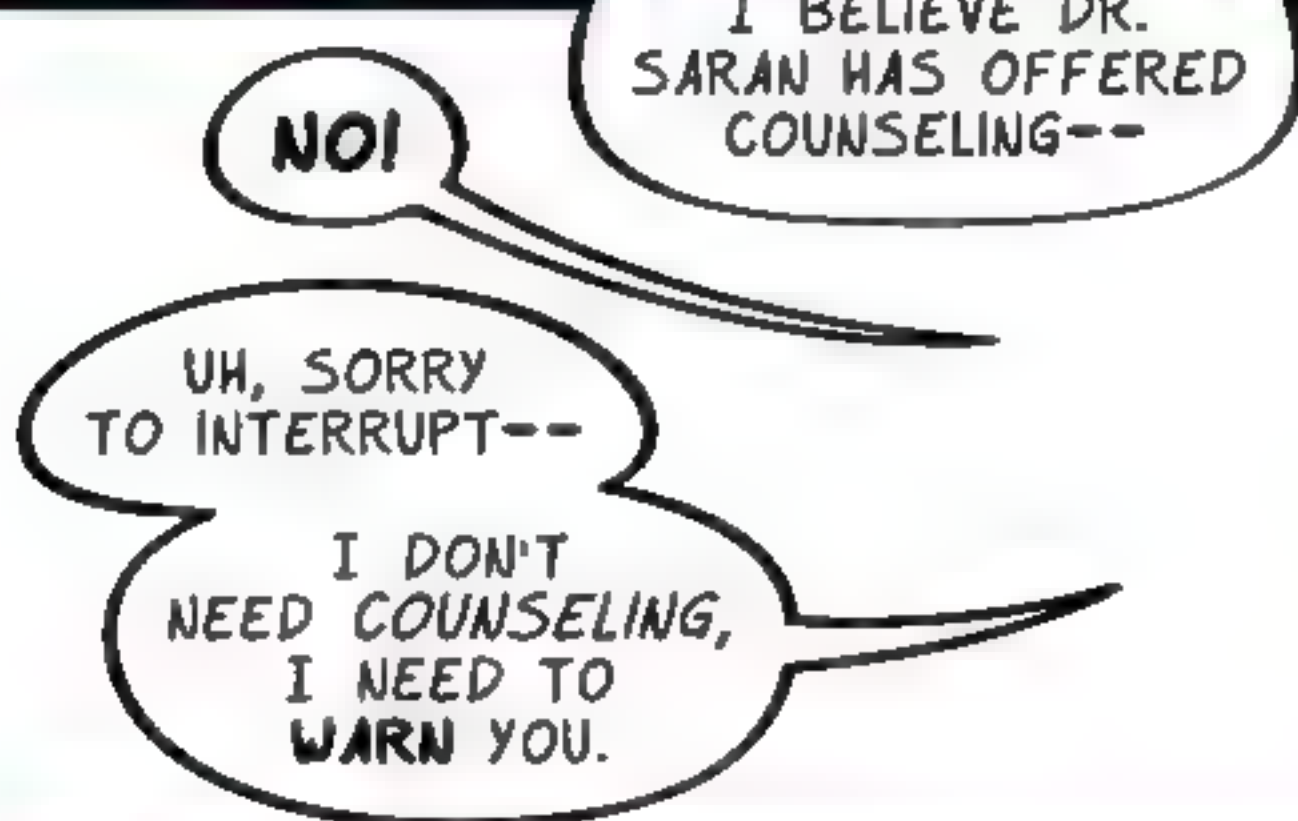




KNOCK
KNOCK









SIGH
WHAT
MANNER OF
THREAT?



I THINK
SHE'S LEADING
SOME SORT OF
STING OPERATION.

THE SECURITY
BREACH LAST NIGHT
MAY BE PART OF IT.



THAT INCIDENT
IS ALREADY UNDER
INVESTIGATION.

DO YOU
HAVE PROOF
THAT PROFESSOR
THOTZEV IS
CONNECTED?

I JUST
THINK...

SHE'S
GOTTA BE!

SHE'S HERE FOR
LIKE **ONE WEEK**,
AND SUDDENLY SOME
OUTSIDER GETS PAST
Z'S SECURITY TEAM?

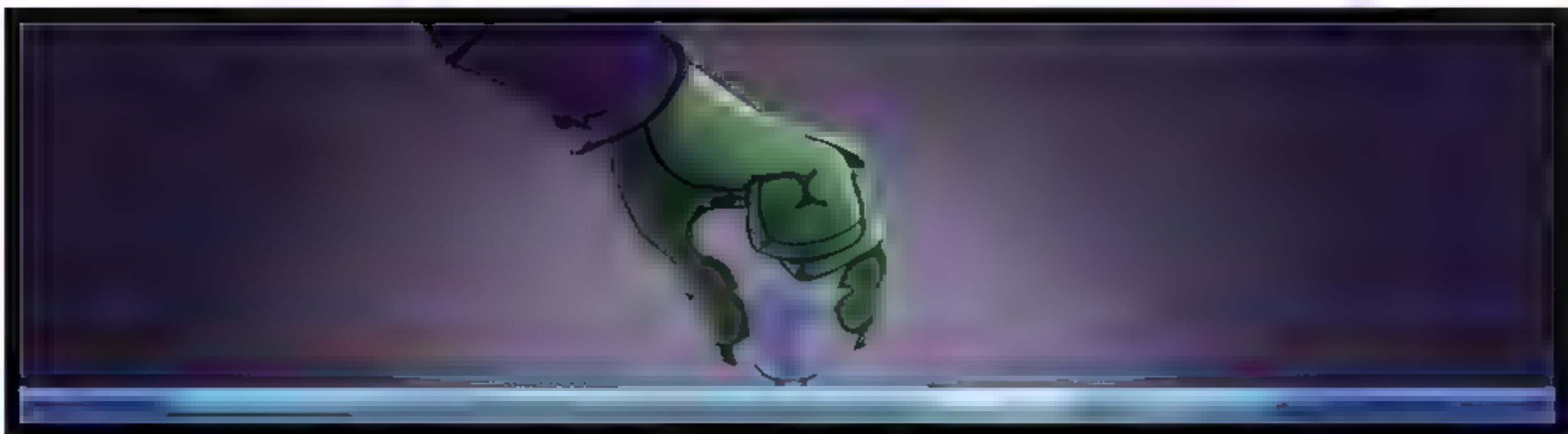
IT'S TOO
CONVENIENT.

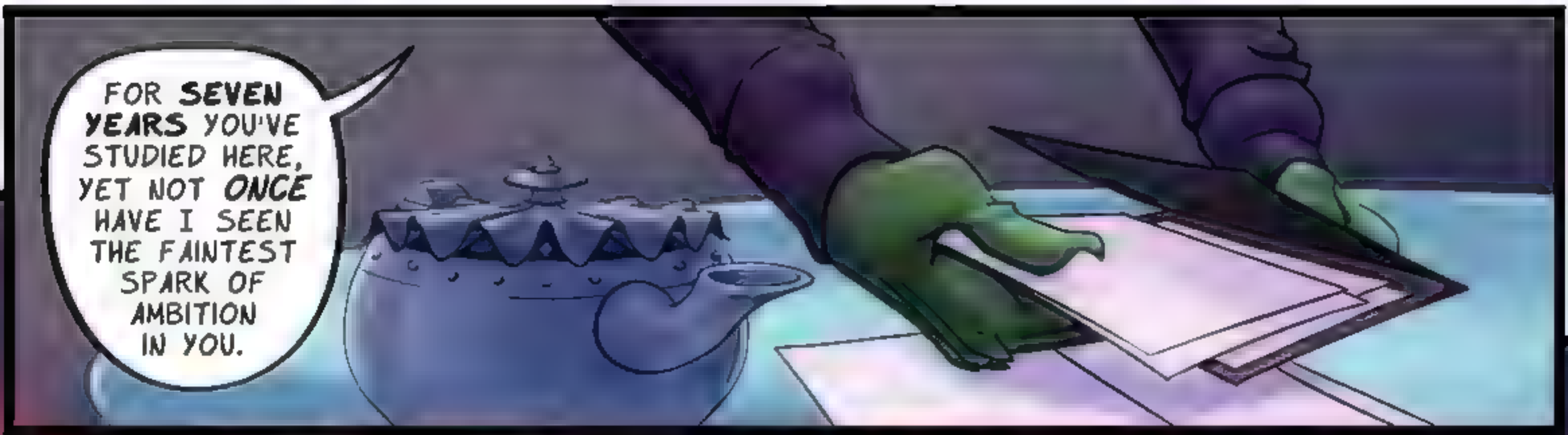


**BASELESS
SUSPICION** DOES
NOT WARRANT SO
GRIEVOUS AN
ACCUSATION--

PLEASE,
HEADMASTER!

WHY ELSE
WOULD A RHO-DA
AGNA AGENT BE
HERE, IF NOT
TO EXPOSE
EVERYTHING?





FOR **SEVEN YEARS** YOU'VE STUDIED HERE, YET NOT **ONCE** HAVE I SEEN THE FAINTEST SPARK OF AMBITION IN YOU.



THE COUNTLESS ABSENCES, THE BARELY PASSING GRADES...

WHY YOU OPTED INTO THE A.I.S.L.E. PROGRAM IS BEYOND ME. IT'S CLEAR YOU HAVE NO INTEREST IN THE CAREER WE'RE TRAINING YOU FOR.

MANY AMONG MY STAFF HAVE REACHED OUT TO YOU, TRYING TO HELP YOU DEVELOP WHAT LITTLE POTENTIAL YOU MAY HAVE-- YET EVERY TIME, YOU HAVE BLOWN THEM OFF.

BUT HERE YOU ARE, WITHOUT ANY MERIT OR CREDIBILITY, **MAKING DEMANDS** OF ME. AS IF THIS SCHOOL'S ROSTER OF EMPLOYEES MUST MEET YOUR **PERSONAL APPROVAL**.

BUT--

YOU REALLY THINK **THIS** IS SOMETHING YOUR MOTHERS WOULD BE PROUD OF?



I UNDERSTAND
THAT YOU'RE AFRAID
OF THE WOMAN WHO
DESTROYED YOUR
FAMILY, OZ.

BUT YOU'RE
ALLOWING THE
ECHOES OF THAT
NIGHT TO LURE YOU
INTO FOOLISH
MISTAKES.

AND I DON'T
JUST MEAN BLINDLY
ACCUSING PROFESSOR
THOTZEV OF PLOTTING
TO RUIN US.

FOR ONE THING,
IT'S DRIVING YOU TO
SQUANDER THE OPPORTUNITIES
YOUR LOVED ONES WORKED
SO HARD TO SECURE
FOR YOU.

NOT ONLY
YOUR MOTHERS--
BUT ZHRENOKOG,
AS WELL.



DO YOU
HAVE **ANY** IDEA
WHAT HE RISKED
WHEN HE BROUGHT
YOU HERE?



WHEN ZHRENOKOG
PULLED YOU FROM THE
ASHES OF YOUR HOME, HE
KNEW I WOULD NEVER HAVE
GIVEN HIM CLEARANCE TO
RAISE A CHILD AT
THE ACADEMY.

SO HE CHOSE
TO BEG FORGIVENESS
RATHER THAN ASK
MY PERMISSION.

HE SMUGGLED
YOU INSIDE
THE WALLS.

ONCE YOU
HAD ALREADY
SEEN TOO MUCH,
HE CONFESSED, AND
BEGGED ME TO **VIOLATE**
MY OWN RULES-- LET
YOU ENROLL HERE
DESPITE HAVING
NOT **EARNED** THAT
PRIVILEGE.

BY RIGHTS,
HE SHOULD HAVE
BEEN FIRED.

AND HE'S
TOO HIGH IN
MY RANKS TO LET
HIM WALK AWAY
FREELY.

I'D HAVE
MONITORED HIM
CLOSELY FOR
THE REST OF
HIS LIFE.



I...
I DIDN'T
KNOW--



OF COURSE
YOU DIDN'T.
NOW LET ME
FINISH.

SECONDLY,
IT'S DRIVING
YOU TO REJECT
ALL SUPPORT.

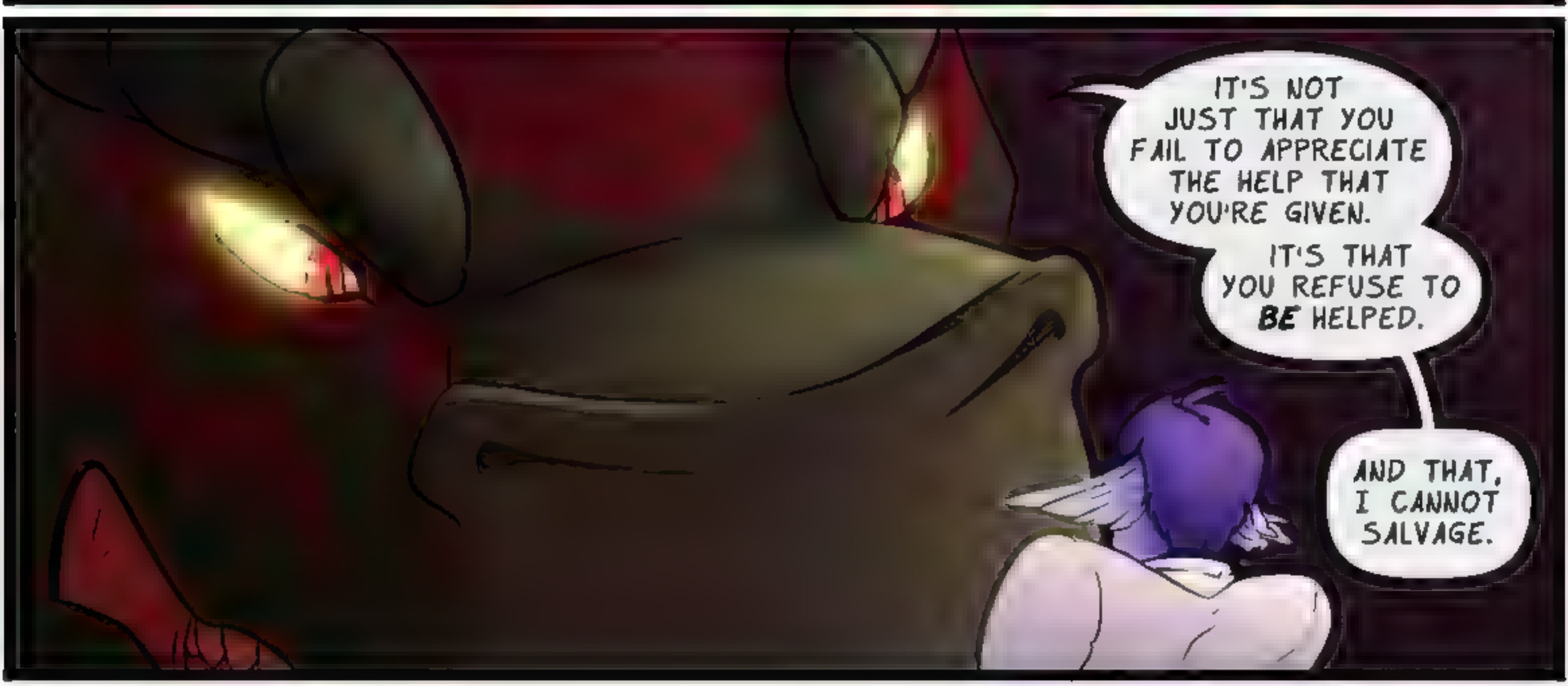


DR. SARAN
HAS OFFERED TO
CONNECT YOU WITH A
TRAUMA SPECIALIST
FOR YEARS NOW.

BUT YOU
INSIST THAT,
DESPITE ALL EVIDENCE,
YOU "DON'T NEED
COUNSELING."

SEVERAL OF
YOUR TEACHERS HAVE
TRIED TO TUTOR YOU
PERSONALLY, IN A FUTILE
EFFORT TO SALVAGE YOUR
ABYSMAL ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE.

BUT YOU
NEVER ACCEPT
THEIR OFFER--
AND IT SHOWS.



IT'S NOT
JUST THAT YOU
FAIL TO APPRECIATE
THE HELP THAT
YOU'RE GIVEN.

IT'S THAT
YOU REFUSE TO
BE HELPED.

AND THAT,
I CANNOT
SALVAGE.



WILL YOU?
CAN YOU?



I HAVE
SEEN NO
EVIDENCE
OF THIS.

CONSIDERING
THAT YOU'VE BEEN
SERVED EVERY PRIVILEGE
ON A SILVER PLATTER, YET
REFUSE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE
OF ANY OF THEM...

THAT IS,
UNTIL NOW.

WHEN YOU
THOUGHT I WOULD
BOW TO YOUR WHIMS
AND TERMINATE ONE
OF MY **HANDPICKED**
STAFF.

THIS IS WHY
YOUR ACCUSATIONS
AGAINST PROFESSOR
THOTZEV HAVE
NO VALIDITY.

YOU HAVE
CAREFULLY
CULTIVATED
AN ETHOS THAT
LACKS ALL
CREDIBILITY.

IN LIGHT
OF THIS, YOU
WILL NEED **HARD
EVIDENCE** TO
SUBSTANTIATE
YOUR CASE.

BUT BY YOUR
OWN ADMISSION,
YOU DON'T *HAVE*
HARD EVIDENCE, AND
CIRCUMSTANTIAL
DETAILS ARE NOT
A SUBSTITUTE.

I UNDERSTAND
THAT YOUR REASONS
FOR BALKING AT HER
PRESENCE ARE LEGITIMATE,
AND FOR THAT, I WILL
GIVE YOU ONE CHANCE
TO RECTIFY THIS:

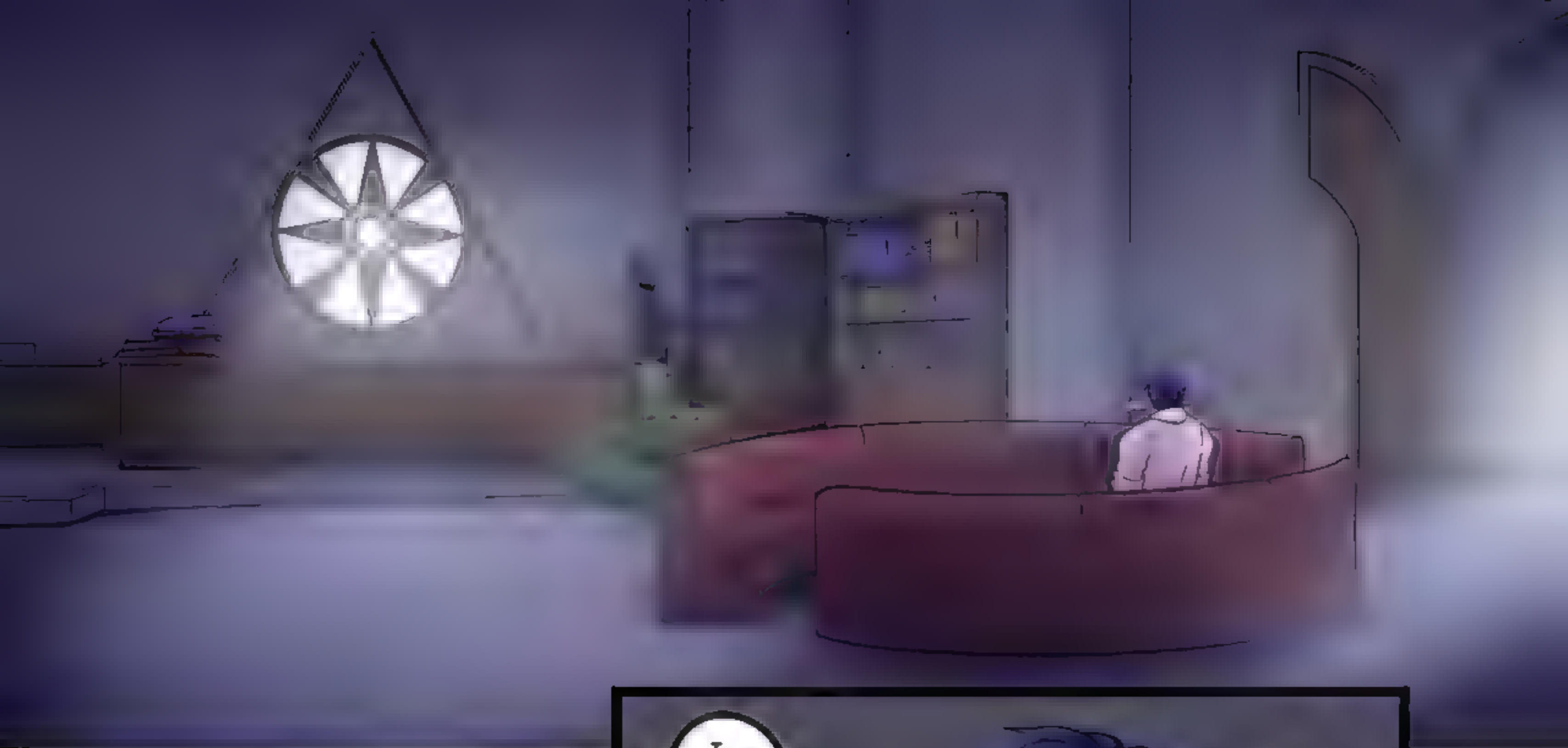
EITHER YOU WILL
PRESENT TANGIBLE
PROOF OF SUSPICIOUS
ACTIVITY--

OR YOU WILL
DROP THIS MATTER
AND WE'LL NEVER
SPEAK OF IT
AGAIN.

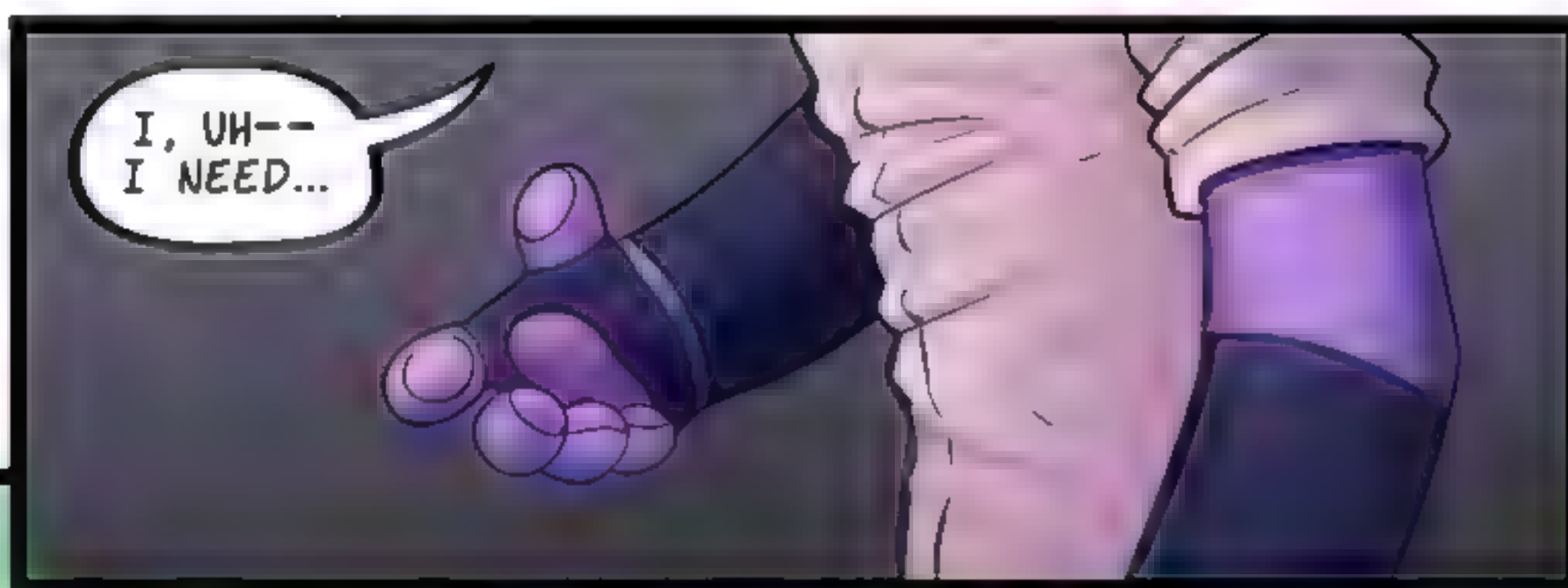
THE NEXT TIME
I HEAR YOU ACCUSING
A STAFF MEMBER OF
KIDNAPPING STUDENTS
AND BRINGING HARM
TO MY DAUGHTER,
WITHOUT **PROOF**...

YOU WILL BE
DROPPED FROM
THE A.I.S.L.E.
PROGRAM DUE TO
SUBSTANDARD
PERFORMANCE.

AM I
CLEAR?







I, UH--
I NEED...



WHAT I
NEED IS TO
GET EVIDENCE
ON HER.

BUT WHERE
TO START
DIGGING?

MAYBE, UH...
HER OFFICE OR
SOMETHING?

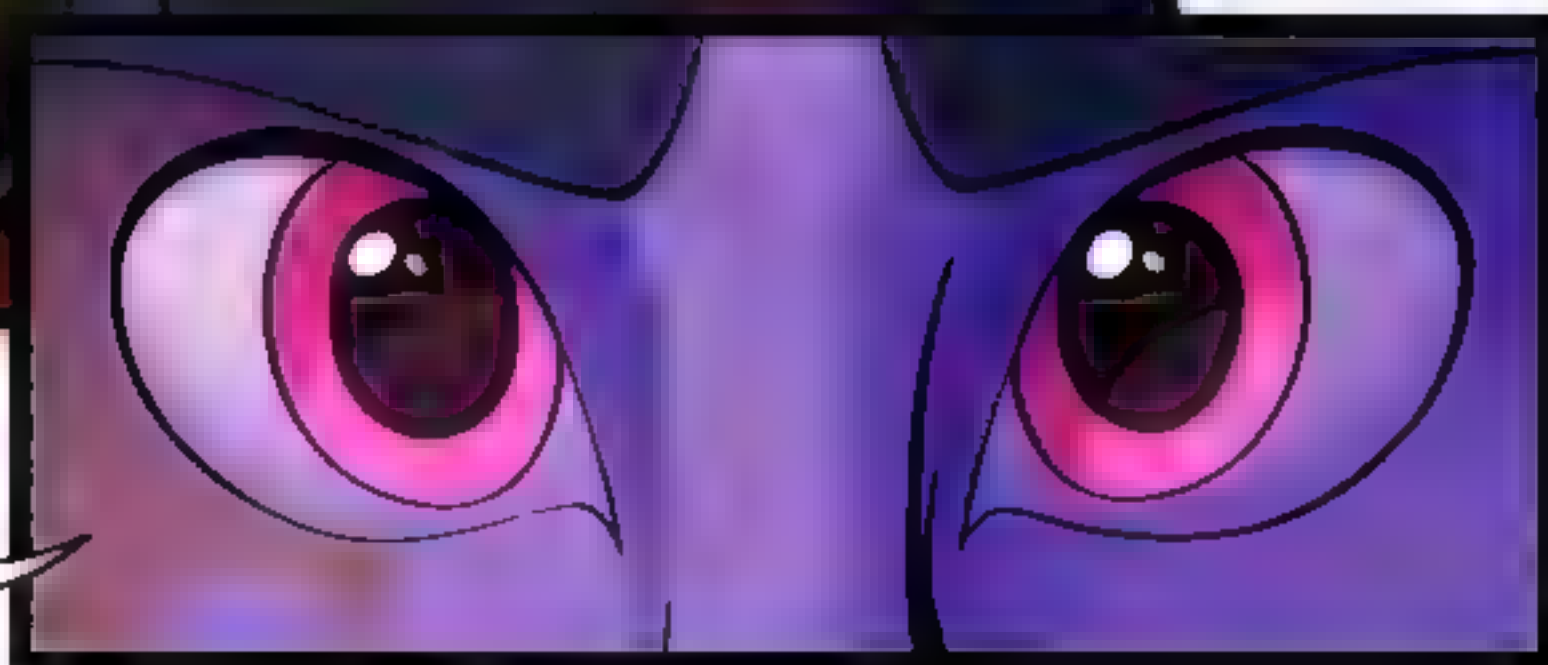


YEAH.

IF I CAN
FIND A WAY
IN WITHOUT
LOOKING TOO
SUSPICIOUS--

THEN GRAB THE
FIRST THING THAT
EXPOSES HER...

I JUST NEED
TO TALK TO HER,
HEADMASTER.
ONE
ON ONE.

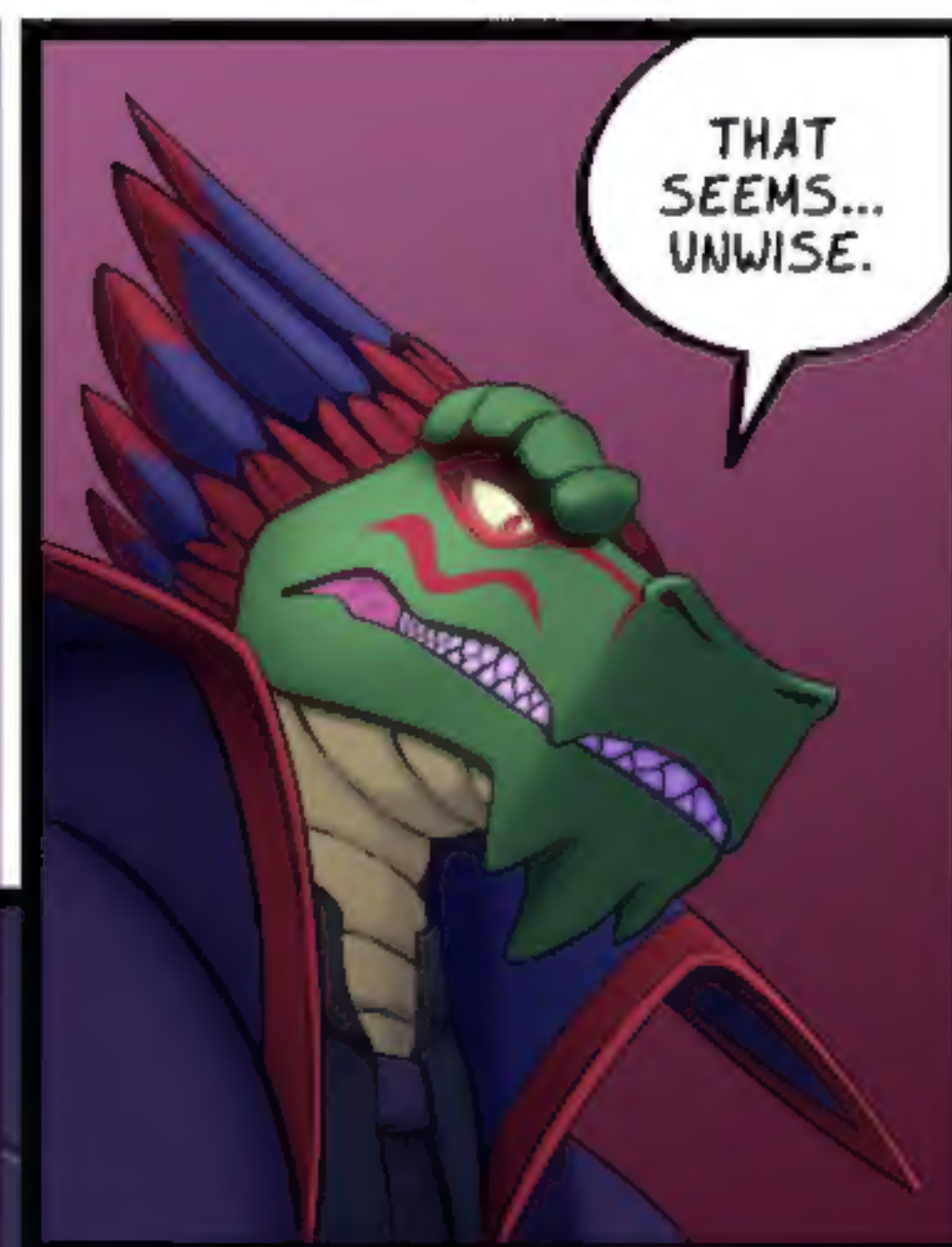




EXCUSE
ME?



I'LL FACE
HER AND TALK
WITH HER.



THAT
SEEMS...
UNWISE.



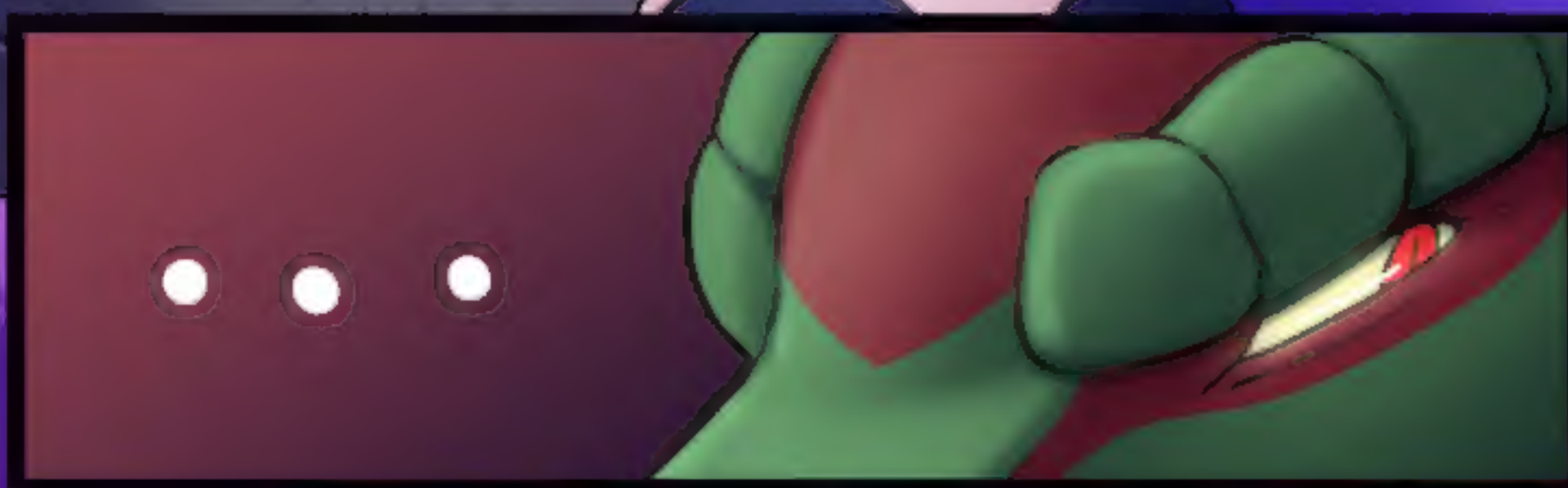
SIR, I
KNOW IT
SOUNDS
CRAZY.

BUT IF
YOU'RE RIGHT,
AND SHE'S NOT
THE MONSTER
I'VE SAID
SHE IS--

--THEN I
WANT TO HEAR
IT FROM HER.

WHILE GETTING
INTO HER OFFICE
AND GOING THROUGH
HER STUFF.

AND PROVING
SHE'S EVIL.



I WILL
IMPOSE ONE
CONDITION:

THIS MEETING
MUST BE SUPERVISED
BY A QUALIFIED
MEDIATOR.

OF **MY**
CHOOSING.





